

OLRIG GRANGE.

EDITED BY

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To

* * * *

*Accept, my Friend, this Offering slight,
Familiar Photographs in verse ;
No subtle matter I indite,
Nor tale of strange events rehearse,
Nor polish wit in couplets terse :
But shadows from our age that fall,
Make pictures in a chamber small,
Where, late, I found these characters
Of Folk that are living — next door to us all.*

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Book First.

Editorial.

I, Herr Professor Künst, Philologus,
Editor of these rhymes, — having no knack
That way, myself, to make my words go chime,
Or none that makes a crystal of my thought,
Face answering to face, and so built up
By inward force of Law inevitable, —
Care not to tag mere fringes to my lines,
And mar their meaning. 'T is a pretty sight
The lissome maiden dancing her light measure,
And keeping time with castanet or timbrel,
When maiden, dance, and timbrel all are one
Joy of great nature. But enough for me
The unwonted dance without the castanet,

The measured tread without the timing jingle.
God giveth speech to all, song to the few.

A quaint old gateway, flanked on either side
By grim, heraldic beasts with beak and claw
And scaly coating, — yet four-footed beasts, —
Opened into a long, straight avenue,
Lined by rough elms, stunted, and sloping west,
And nipped by sharp sea-winds. Without a turn
It ran up to a tall, slim, gray old house,
With many blinking windows, row on row,
And high-pitched gables rising, step by step,
Above heraldic beasts with beak and claw,
That pranced at every corner. A green bank,
Broken with flower-plots, on the one side dropt
Down to a prattling brook : upon the other
A group of brown Scotch firs reared their straight boles
And spreading crowns, dotted with cawing rooks :
And then a holly hedge engirt the place,
Which altogether covered scant an acre.

Eastward you saw the glimmer of the sea,
And the white pillar of the lighthouse tall
Guarding the stormy Ness : a minster church
Loomed with twin steeples high above the smoke
Of a brisk burgh, offspring of the church
And of the sea, and with an old Norse love
Of the salt water, and the house of God,
And letters and adventure. On the west,
Cleft by the stream, a slow-retiring hill
Embayed a goodly space which once had been
Waste moorland for the curlew, and the snipe
Haunted its marshes. Lately, growing wealth,
From fleets of fishing craft, and ventures far
To Greenland and Archangel, had subdued
The peat-hag and the stony wilderness :
And here and there a citizen's country-house
Stood among fields where cattle browsed, or corn
Was rustling : yet there still were here and there
Stretches of heathy moss and yellow gorse,
And desert places strewn with white bleached stones,

And gray rocks tufted o'er with birch and hazel.
And through the gorse, and over rock and stone,
The prattling brook leaped downward to the sea.

The slim, gray house with its heraldic beasts,
Nestling in its scant acre of flower-plots
And greensward, at the end of the elm-tree drive,
Stood plainly in ancestral dignity,
Aloof from citizen's villa : shorn of wealth,
It was the home of culture and simple taste,
And heir of fine traditions.

By the door,
Where it was hid by honeysuckle sprays
And brier-rose that trailed around the porch,
There stood a youth, at early twilight, making
Impatient gestures, switching thistle-down
And nettle and dandelion, and whate'er
His hasty stroke might reach ; yet humorous
Rather than fretful, for the art was his
To break vexations with a ready jest,

As one that, on the stirrup duly rising,
Rides lightly through the world. A graceful youth,
And tall, and slightly stooping, with features high
And thin and colorless ; yet earnest life
Beamed full of hope and energy and help
From his great lustrous eyes, though now and then
They swam into a dreamy, far-off gaze,
As seeing the invisible. He was
A student who had travelled many a field
Of arduous learning, planted venturous foot
On giddy ledge of speculative thought,
And searched for truth o'er mountain, shore, and sea,
In stone and flower, and every living thing
Where he might read the open secret of God
With his own eyes, and ponder out its meaning.
Intent he was to know, and knowing do
The work laid to his hand ; yet evermore,
As he toiled up the solemn stair with joy,
Caught by some outlook on a larger world,
He seemed to pause, and gaze, and dream a dream.

These moods I noted when he was my pupil,
And some strange vocable from India,
Or fragment of the old Egyptian speech,
Would suddenly arrest his eager quest,
And sunder us, like the ocean or the grave.

So stood he, in the twilight, near his home,
And waiting for his sister, smote the weeds ;
Impetuous, humorous, bright, and mystical,
The wonder and the glory of the place,
Scarce out of boyhood, yet the pride of all.

Trained for a priest, for that is still the pride
And high ambition of the Scottish mother,
There was a kind of priestly purity
In him, and a deep, solemn undertone
Ran through his gayest fancies, and his heart
Reached out with manifold sympathies, and laid
Fast hold on many outcast and alone
I' the world. But being challenged at the door

Of God's high Temple to indue himself
With armor that he had not proved, to clothe
With articles of ready-made Belief
His Faith inquisitive, he rent the Creed
Trying to fit it on, and cast it from him ;
Then took it up again, and found it worn
With age, and riddled by the moth, and rotten.
Therefore he trod it under foot, and went
Awhile with only scant fig-leaves to clothe
His naked spirit, longing after God,
But striving more for knowledge than for faith.
The Priest was left behind ; the hope of Glory
Became pursuit of Fame ; and yet a light
From heaven kept hovering always over him,
Like twilight from a sun that had gone down.

Loquitur Thorold.

QUICK, Hester, quick! the old scarlet cloak
And silken hood are dainty trim
'Mong birch and hazel and lichen'd rock;
The sun is but a little rim
Above the hill, and twilight dim
Is settling o'er the leaping brook
Where we our summer pleasance took
When youth was light of heart and limb,
And Life was the dream of a Fairy Book.

Quick! let us spend the gloaming there:

A plague on bonnets, shawls, and pins,
And last nice touches of the hair,

That just begin when one begins

To lose his patience! Women's sins
Are not alone the ills they do,
But those that they provoke you to,
While smiling lips and dimpling chins
Wonder what can be the matter with you.

Well, minx! I hope you're pleased at last:
You've made yourself an angel nice,
And me a brute this half-hour past.
Now, did you ever count the price
When each new grace costs some new vice?
You fondle a curl, — my wrath I pet;
You finger a ribbon, — I fume and fret;
You'd ruin a husband worse than dice,
Buying your beauty at such a rate.

Look, how the slanting sunbeams long
Gird with light-rings the gray birch-trees;
And from his unseen place of song
The skylark on the evening breeze

Shakes down his fluttering melodies:
The conies from their burrows creep,
The troutlets in the still pools leap,
The pines their odorous gums release,
And the daisies are pink in their dewy sleep.

Perchance we ne'er shall hear again,
Thus hand in hand, the swift brook flow,
Except in dreams when we are fain
To haunt the fabled long-ago;
For ere to-morrow's sun is low,
I haste me to the crowded street
Where every stranger face I meet
Shall less of kithly feeling show
Than the rippling gleam of this water sweet.

Nay, dear; my heart is full of hope;
Bid me not stay in my career.
Our little Bourg hath little scope
For aught but gossip in the ear;

And I must gird me to appear
A man among the strong and brave,
A man with purpose high and grave,
Still fronting duty without fear,
And helming my prow to the threatening wave.

'T was sweet to dream as we have dreamed
Together in years long ago,
When Life might be, as Fancy deemed,
For aught the happy child could know,
A bright illusion, and a show
Create at will, and shaped to meet
Each changeful whim, and quaint conceit,
And varying mood of joy or woe,
Nor ever with tragic end complete.

But ill for him who will not see
The dream to be a dream indeed,
And life a fateful mystery,
And iron fact the only creed

To lean on in the hour of need.
The child may dream; the man must act
With reverence for the world's great fact;
And look to toil and sweat and bleed,
And gather his energies all compact.

Why might I not my battle fight
Here by your side with pen and book?
Girls never understand aright
That men must leave the ingle-nook
And for a larger wisdom brook
Experience of a harder law,
And learn humility and awe:
And books are mirrors where you look
But on shadows of things which others saw.

How sweet the old brook tinkles still
Through daisy mead and golden broom,
Where once we placed our water-mill,
And heard it clicking in the gloom,

Hushed, sleepless, in our little room!
Yonder, we caught the tiny trout, —
Our first, — you carried it about
All day, complaining of its doom,
And trying each pool if its life were gone out.

There are no traces of the mill:
But lo! our garden in the nook,
The walks, we shaped with simple skill,
Bordered with white stones from the brook;
And there are still some flowers we took
From garden plots, and planted here:
Our works decay and disappear,
God's frailest works abide and look
Down on the ruins we toil to rear.

Here is the sloping mossy bank,
With slender pansies purple-eyed,
And drooping harebells, and the rank
Plume-fern in all its palmy pride;

And yonder the still waters glide
Where the big rasps and brambles grew ;—
The stream was deep and broad for you,
And there my imping manhood tried
To reach at them for my sister true.

Lo ! here we dreamed the Pilgrim's dream ;
And went forth, that bright summer day,
To seek the New Jerusalem,
Along the strait and thorny way
Tangled with gorse and bramble spray,
But never found the wicket-gate :
Distraught, our mother wandered late,
While we beside the mill-dam lay,
And saw the newt creep 'mong the bulrushes great.

There, too, we dreamt a lonely isle,
With white waves girdled by the sea
That stormed along the beach, the while
A good ship struggled gallantly ;

And I alone must savèd be,
And thou wert Friday, by and by,
Whose mystic footprint caught my eye,
On the brown sand; and thou to me
Wert slave ever ready to run or fly.

And we had Geni of the Lamp, —
The lamp was ne'er so rubbed before;
And jars and crocks we left in damp
Odd corners all the night or more,
Which we as fishers hauled ashore,
Listening to hear the prisoned Gin^o
Bemoan his captive fate within:
And what if he were free to soar
Like a dreadful giant with smoke and din!

Ay me! What happy dreams we had!
And still they linger fondly here;
The air seems nimble with the glad
Quaint fancies of our childhood dear;

And here, at least, they do appear
Half real still ; it seems profane
To reason them down as fancies vain,
Where all that meets the eye and ear
Brings the faith and glory of youth back again.

Then by and by great thoughts were ours
Of triumph and high enterprise,
As knowledge broadened with our powers,
And Science oped our wondering eyes
To Nature's fruitful mysteries.
No life of vulgar wealth we sought,
Nor pleasure from indulgence got ;
We would be brave and true and wise,
And hoard all treasures of noble thought.

The heroes of historic age
Beckoned us on to glorious deeds
And hardy training, and to wage
Victorious war on foemen weeds :

And now we breathed on oaten reeds
Or conned, apart, a secret song,
Ashamed as if the deed were wrong ;

And now we rubbed your amber beads
For trial of their attraction strong.

We gathered wild-flowers in the woods,
We wandered miles for heath and fern,
We found in brakes the callow broods
Of singing birds ; we sought the earn
On its lone cliff ; and strove to learn
All Nature's kindly providence
For all its creatures, and the sense
Of all its changes to discern,
With all the infinite why and whence.

We turned the glass to moon and stars,
The Pleiads, and the Milky Way,
To Saturn's ring, and fiery Mars,
And Venus haunting close of day :

We bent the glass to watch the play
Of spasm-like life in water-drops ;
And where the red stone upward crops
We hammered, eager for a prey
Of moss or fern from the old-world copse.

And O those days beside the sea!
The skerries paved with knotted shells,
The bright pools of anemone,
The star-fish with its fretted cells,
The scudding of the light-foam-bells
Along the stretch of rippled strand
Spotted with worms of twisted sand,
The white gulls, and the shining sails,
And the thoughts they all brought from the Wonder-land!

And fondly watched our mother dear
The dawning promise of our youth,
Lilting a ballad low and clear,
And fostering fearless love of truth

And meekness, piety and ruth,
And charity and womanhood ;
For so she said, that to be good
Was to be rich in very sooth ;
And the good Lord gave his children food.

And still unfailing laughter pealed
At homely jests that ne'er grew old ;
And still we breathless heard, and thrilled
When the old winter's tale was told ;
And still, as thought grew keen and bold,
Her loving instinct steadied all
The march of mind with faithful call
To patient duty manifold,
And to wait and work when the light was small.

O happy childhood ! wakening first
In moony realms of fond romance ;
And quenching soon a deeper thirst
In science that refrained to glance

Scorn at old faiths : so we could once
Believe we heard the mermaid sing,
And that the deft Fays shaped the ring
Footing o' moonlights in the dance,
And that Spirits lay hidden in everything.

Nor need that early faith be all
In clear definèd knowledge lost :
Though never Greek to Ilium's wall
In the swift ships the sea had crossed,
Each wrathful king with banded host,
The tale of Troy were true to me,
More than bare fact of history :
There is more truth than is engrossed
In your musty sheepskin guaranty.

And there is truth transcending far
The way of scientific thought,
Which travels to the farthest star,
And verges on the smallest mote,

But all beyond it knoweth not ;
Its ladder, based on earth, must lean
Its summit on the felt and seen ;

But ever our hearts their rest have sought
In that dim Beyond, where it hath not been.

'T is wisdom, doubtless, for the man
To learn the fact and steadfast Law ;
Yet Wisdom also in its plan

Embraced the child's great wondering awe
Which found the Unseen in all it saw,
Whom now we seek with cruel strain
Of longing heart and wildered brain,
Tossing our barren chaff and straw
In search of the old diviner grain.

Can it be wisdom to forget

What wisdom taught us yesterday ?
What if the form may change, and yet
The truth abide that in it lay ?

And what if Gin and Ghost and Fay
Were but the form of highest truth, —
The Father's parable for youth,
To teach that Law is Will, to say,
I am the worker of all, in sooth !

So might the dream be, after all,
The key which confident Science lost,
And hath been groping round the wall
Of mystery, perplexed and tossed,
In search of, making many a boast,
Yet conscious that her universe
Of several facts and laws is scarce
God's living world ; yea, is at most
His graveyard, whither she drove his hearse.

Our Science knows no Father yet ;
He seems to vanish as we think ;
And most of all, when we are set
To fish for Faith upon the brink

Of nature ; we draw, link by link,
A line of close-plied reasoning
Elaborate, and hope to bring,
Besides the baited thought we sink,
God from the depths at the end of a string !

Ah ! who shall find the perfect Whole
In the small fragment that we see ?
Or mirror in the flesh-bound soul
The image of Immensity ?
Our hearts within us faint, and we,
Amid the storm and darkness driven,
Cry out for God to earth and heaven :
But what if all our answer be
Only our cry by the echoes given ?

As light outside the Temple vast
Coming and going, with sudden gleams
On altar, pillar, and pavement cast,
Down on our lower world He streams

An extern glory. So it seems ;
But who can tell? The things that press
On our dream-life's half-consciousness,
Though real as the hills and streams,
Are the stuff dreams are made of nevertheless.

O days of Faith! when earth appeared
A Bethel sure, an House of God,
And in the dream his voice was heard,
And sorrow was his chastening rod ;
And stony pillow and grassy sod
Seemed, lying on the Father's breast ;
And men had many an angel guest,
And ever where the pilgrim trod
God was near him, The Highest and Best.

Great days of Faith and miracle !
When nature might not be explained,
And the earth kept her secret well,
But there was worship high, unfeigned,

And men were noble, and God reigned ;
They were not barren though we laugh,
And swear their mills ground finest chaff ;
For peace and love and truth unstained
Are more than steam and a telegraph.

How is it that our modern thought
Has travelled from these sacred ways,
And every certain truth is bought
By parting with some Faith and Praise ?
We light our earth with the quenched rays
Of heaven ; and yet we only seek
Truth for the strong and for the weak,
Loving it more than length of days,
Or the ruby lip and the blooming cheek.

Our science, with its several facts
And fragmentary laws, hath lost
The unity that all compacts,
And makes a cosmos of the host.

Force changes, but its changes cost,
And in the elemental war
Conserving transformations are
So wasteful, Time shall one day boast
But a burnt-out sun and a cinder star.

Well, well ; our mother knew no laws,
Except the Ten Commandments clear,
Nor talked of First or Final Cause,
But walked with God in love and fear,
And always felt that he was near
By instinct of a spirit true ;
And she had peace and strength in lieu
Of that unrest and trouble here
Which break like the billows on me and you.

Enough ; we have not yet redeemed
The promise of our early days ;
We are not all that we have dreamed,
Nor all that she would crown with praise ;

But we have loving been always,
And earned some little fame, and hope
For more where there is ampler scope ;
And you will crown me with my bays,
Sweet sister mine, when I reach the top.

Nay, say not that I shall forget,
And find a dearer love than thee ;
A sweeter love was never yet
Than this sufficing joy in me :
Thou art my fulness. I shall be
But half a heart and head and will
Except thou be beside me still,
For in our being's mystery
Ever the better part thou didst fill.

Not jealous, say you? but afraid
About my principles and views?
Why, it was you that first betrayed,
You little sceptic, dangerous, loose,

And unsound doctrine I but use
The wicked weapons that you made :
Even as a child you never prayed
With half my faith in those old Jews,
And we ne'er got the Catechism into your head.

But my Faith is not gone, although
At times it seems to fade away.
I would I were as long ago ;
I cling to God, and strive to say
The Devil and all his angels Nay :
But in the crucible of thought
Old forms dissolve, nor have I got,
Or seem to wish, new moulds of clay
To limit the boundless truth I sought.

Can the great God be aught but vague,
Bounded by no horizon, save
What feeble minds create to plague
High Reason with? We madly crave

For definite truth, and make a grave,
Through too much certainty precise,
And logical distinction nice,
For all the little Faith we have,
Buying clear views at a terrible price.

Too dear, indeed, to part with Faith
For forms of logic about God,
And walk in lucid realms of death,
Whose paths incredible are trod
By no mind living. Faith's abode
Is mystery forevermore,
Its life to worship and adore,
And meekly bow beneath the rod,
When the day is dark, and the burden sore.

What soft, low notes float everywhere
In the soft glories of the moon!
Soft winds are whispering in the air,
And murmuring waters softly croon

To mossy banks a muffled tune ;
Softly a rustling faint is borne
Over the fields of waving corn, —

God's still small voice, we drown at noon,
Which is everywhere heard in the even and morn.

Hush ! let us go. The stars shine out,
Yonder the moonlight on the sea, —
The fishers spread their sails about
Its tangled rings ; from yon lime-tree
The hum of some belated bee
Sways as if lost ; I seem to hear
A boding murmur in my ear
Of coming storm. What if it be
Omen of tempest in my career ?

Strange ! that whene'er the hour arrives,
Which we have longed for day and night,
To act the purpose of our lives,
Fades all the glory and the light,

Fails too the sense of power and might ;
And there are omens in the air,
And voices whispering Beware!—

But never victor in the fight
Heeded the portents of fear and care.

Book Second.

Editorial.

She sat alone at evening by the fire
In a dim parlor panelled with brown pine,
Some sewing in her lap, — yet she sewed not,
A book in hand, — and yet she did not read,
My Hester, as she sits beside me now,
His sister, twin in birth, in culture twin,
And with a marked unlikeness, strangely like.

For he was tall, and a black shock of hair,
Of stiff, rough hair, rose o'er a forehead broad
And noticeable, though you noticed only
The large gray eyes beneath, — not cruel-gray,
But swimming, dreamy eyes that seemed to gaze
Into a world of wonders far away.

And she was fair, a golden blue-eyed maid,
A slight, small girl, with the Norse aspect frank,
And sunny and intelligent, and firm
Of purpose ; for she never dreamt, or dreamt
Knowingly, swinging on an anchor held
Fast to a bottom of clearest consciousness :
A lady practical, imperative,
With mind compact and clear and self-possessed,
And reason peremptory and competent ;
Ne'er blinded by the glamour of loving thought,
And yet not less enamored with her thought,
But loyal, true, and womanly. Wherein
The unlike likeness lay you could not tell ;
But as you travailed with them day by day,
And grew familiar with their looks and ways,
And knew the tenor of their thoughts, you felt
The twain were twin alike in mind and body.
Deft is she to detect, and to dissect
Folly and foible and weakness, and with keen
Shaft of light humor, or bolt of piercing wit

✱

Can reach the joints and marrow ; yet she says
That if her hero is but brave and true,
She knows herself to be so little and poor,
And knows the world, beside, so mean and false,
And knows how hard the battle to be true,
That she bates not her faith or love or worship
For seams and flaws that only show him human,
And linked by weakness closer to our love.

And in those years her brother she adored,
And he was worthy ; and she loves me now ;
With all my sins and mine infirmities
At large writ in her book, she loves me still,
My Hester who is sitting by my side,
And in whose features, scanning one by one,
I trace, amid unlikeness, likeness strange
To him who halved a common life with her.

Of an old stock, lairds of the barren moorland
While mitred abbots lorded there supreme,

But Vikings from Norwegian fiords long
Before the cross or mitre or the light
Of Christian Faith left but the names of Thor
And Thing and Balder clinging to the shores ;
In later times they gathered from the sea
Wealth that the land denied, and swept the coast
With net and yawl, and had their iron-bound fleets
Spearing the Arctic whale, whose jawbones arched
A lofty gateway to their busy wharf ;
Or hunting seal, and walrus fierce in battle,
But faithful and piteous to its uncouth young :
And thereof many a stirring tale was told
Of perilous combat, touched with pathos rude,
By weather-beaten mariners at home
In the long nights beside the winter fire.
So they grew rich, and had enriched the land ;
But the last Burgher laird died young, and left
Many large ventures on the perilous sea
And in more perilous mines. His gentle widow,
Harassed by alien cares, retired at length

With her twin children from the wildering task,
Cheerfully leaving three parts of her wealth
Somewhere — she knew not where — in falling scrip,
And flooded mines, and meshes of the law.

But from that hour, a happy mother, she
Lived for her children, trained them faithfully
With generous culture to all nobleness,
Giving them for inheritance the wealth
Of the old wisdom and the new research :
And then she also died. Thorold and Hester
Were last of all the Asgards of Orlig.
And so she sat that evening by the fire,
In the dim parlor panelled with brown pine,
And nothing seemed to do, and nothing see,
But all the more she was alert to hear,
As if she listened eager for the coming
Of one who yet came not ; she only heard
The far-off moaning of the restless sea,
The nearer rippling of the lightsome brook,

The rising breeze that tossed the brown Scotch pines,
The rooks that cawed, high-cradled by the breeze,
The creak and slamming of a wicket-gate,
The barking of a dog in upland farm,
The untimely crowing of a wakeful cock,
And all the inexplicable sounds that haunt
Turret and stair, and lobbies in old houses
When the wind stirs o' nights. And then she felt
The creeping of an eerie loneliness.

Loquitur Hester.

SO he is gone, and I am left
Alone, and very lone it is,
To keep the dear old home bereft
Of all that made it home and bliss,
Of all on earth that I should miss.
I almost fear my heart will break ;
And yet it must not, for his sake ;
But it is hard to suffer this,
For there's nothing I look on but makes my heart ache.

It is like living with the dead,
These pictures, and the old arm-chair,
And all I meet when I turn my head
In every room, on every stair ;

Their eyes gaze on me everywhere,
And all so silent ; yet I seem
At times to hear, as in a dream,
Dear voices calling here and there,
And mocking my heart as I stitch and seam.

I must not turn a silly maid,
A feather-pated girl, the prey
Of weak nerves and an empty head,
That sighs through all the vacant day,
And trembles, in the evening gray,
Over a dull dog-eared romance,
'To see the stealthy moonbeams glance,
Or hear the wind in crannies play,
Or the mice in the wainscot squeak and dance.

Why might I not have gone with him?

We ne'er were parted heretofore ;
I am as strong of heart and limb :
At worst, I could not suffer more

Than fretting here. O, it was sore
To stand upon the windy pier,
And try to wave my hand, and cheer,
With something in my heart's wild core
That surged with rebellion and trouble and fear!

I deem it barbarous, this way
Of making woman a helpful wife
By keeping us poor girls away
From all the enterprise of life,
Its hardship, and its generous strife.
All men are Turks at heart, and hold
That sugar-plums, and rings of gold,
And pretty silks, and jewels rife,
Are all that we need till we're fat and old.

And yet they want us, ne'ertheless,
To think their thoughts, and sympathize
With all the struggle and distress
Of souls that would be true and wise,

To laud them when they win the prize,
To cheer them if they strive and fail,
And gird anew their glorious mail,
And then sink back to housewiferies,
To shirts and flannels, and beef and ale.

What if I were to follow him
To that great London? I have tried
To think and write, and I might swim,
With other minnows, by the side
Of the great fish that keep the tide.
A tale, a woman's touch of art,
And insight into woman's heart,
Not deeply thought, but keenly spied,
That were not, surely, too lofty a part.

But it would vex him ; and his love
Is more to me than all the world :
There's nothing he dislikes above
A short-haired woman, frizzly, curled,

Her flag for woman's rights unfurled,
Her middle finger black with ink,
Her staring eyes that will not wink,
Like spectacles, — a double-barrelled
Terror, he says, to men that think.

So that would never do : beside,
There's plenty other reasons. He
Would keep the old household by my side,
And all things as they used to be ;
The plants, and stones, and library,
The fossils rare, and etchings nice,
And other things beyond all price :
And there's another might long for me,
And his evening chess-board, once or twice.

I'm cold, and yet the night is warm ;
And restless, yet the hour is still ;
And haunted by a vague alarm,
Yet all is hopeful, and he will

Surely a glorious fate fulfil.
I dare not doubt it. He is true
To the high aim he has in view,
Intolerant of hoary ill,
But open to all that is good and new.

The doubts of venturous thought have cast
Uncertain shadows o'er his mind ;
His soaring spirit has not passed
Above the realm of clouds, to find
The light serene that lies behind :
But he is pure and undefiled,
Unworldly as a little child,
And still, amid the darkness blind,
Clings to the Lowly One, meek and mild.

He has a scholar's culture, hence
A Greek-like taste, calm, purified ;
He has the poet's delicate sense
Of beauty, ever with good allied ;

A nature large and free and wide
And plastic and impressible, —
Too much perhaps : a stronger will,
A little more of self and pride,
And he would be safer from earthly ill.

And then he has more sympathy,
Perchance, with truth and beauty than
The power creative : he would be
A stronger, if a narrower man,
Less balanced ; for his equal plan,
Diffused on all sides from his youth,
Unto all wisdom, grace, and truth,
Into most just proportions ran,
With risk of being only graceful and smooth.

A perfect critic of all good,
But longing ever to be more :
Well understanding every mood
Of genius, finding every door

Of knowledge open, and the lore
Of ages to his insight free,
For he has still the master-key;
Yet would he launch out from the shore,
And plough for himself an untravelled sea.

And there is risk that such a mind
Shall be too nice and delicate,
And in its equipoise may find
A very impotence, and wait,
Nor ever dare a glorious fate,
The sense of fine perfection still
Embarrassing the purposed will,
Until the shadows gather late,
And the mist is folded about the hill.

Yet if he were not what he is,
I could not love him then as now:
It were another mind than his,
Other, not better than, I trow:

He hath such courage to avow
His faiths, such knowledge to impart,
Such boundless sympathy with Art,
Such fancies, like the blossomed bough
That clasps the fruit in its fragrant heart.

Then he is brave and beautiful
In manhood, radiant with the might
Of that rich life and grace which rule
The admiration and delight
Of Fashion,—witty, airy, bright :
I dread for him a woman's wiles,
And cunning arts, and winsome smiles,
And trifling with the heart and right,
Tangling his love in her loveless toils.

I would not have him not to love
Another, dearer life than mine :
Let but a maiden worthy prove,
And with his love my love shall twine

To clothe her with a joy divine.
But he esteems all women pure,
Can spy no craft in looks demure,
Holds them all angels good that pine
For heaven in a world they strive to cure.

And so I fear for him ; I dread
That he may set his love on one
With little either of heart or head
Save what he dowers her with, and run
After a shadow in the sun,
Only to learn his weary fate
When the great heart is desolate,
And the fire burns, and there is none
Cometh to cheer him early or late.

And once I feared that he had placed
His all on such a chance. And she —
The grand, fine lady, scarcely graced
With outsides of hypocrisy —

True to the flesh she seemed to be :
And yet he made a god of her,
And girt her with an atmosphere
Of incense, light, and poesie, —
But the glory was all in the worshipper.

'T is strange, the finest insight still
Seems blindest to a woman's art.
The base get love unto their fill ;
The noble thirst for that true heart
Where to they may their life impart,
And find in it their solace meet :
But clothing with their fancies sweet
A wanton or a fool, they start
To know in their love but their sorrow complete.

Out of the world he lives afar
In chivalrous ideal trust,
Enshrining woman like a star
For worship of the good and just,

Where no unworthy thought or lust
May enter with unhallowed tread ;
And though he has a sister made,
Like other girls, of sorry dust,
He never would see that our gold was but lead.

O if men knew us only, — knew
The cowardice and commonplace,
The petty circle of our view,
The meanness and the littleness
That lie behind a pretty face !
Thank heaven, I was not bred with girls,
A thing of ribbons, scents, and curls,
And quaint in fancies of a dress,
And gold and jewels and strings of pearls.

Our mother trained me up with him
To love the right, the truth to speak,
The scholar's thoughtful lamp to trim,
And trace the rhythm of numbered Greek,

And in the world of God to seek
Wisdom in knowledge of his ways,
And gladness in the song of praise

Which rises from the strong and weak
To the Father that keepeth us all our days.

And this, at least, I've learnt, that man
Can be more godlike far than we,
And never is more glorious than

When bending low a suppliant knee
In his pure-hearted chivalry,
Entranced with his own spell of might,
Blind with his own exuberant light,

Lost in love's rapture and ecstasy,
Which girls only trifle with, day and night.

Therefore I fear his life may be
A disenchantment day by day,
A glory that he seems to see,
Only to see it fade away ;

And then perchance he may not play
The great part that he would in life,
But waste him in a petty strife

With little cares, and be the prey
Of fretful thoughts, and a foolish wife.

Then will he die, and leave no trace

Of all the great work he has schemed ;
And men will say for such a race

He has not trained, but only dreamed ;

And that pure light of heaven which streamed
Along his morning pilgrimage,

Broadening and brightening every stage,

No forecast true shall be esteemed
Of the battle which genius has to wage.

Hence, idle fear ! He's brave and true,

With patient toil as well as fire ;

What fruitful effort can, he'll do

To crown with triumph high desire,

And make the wondering world admire,
And win himself a lofty name.
Yet what were all the pride of Fame
If he were linked in bondage dire
To a heartless flirt, or a haughty dame!

The Herr Professor says I'm not
Just to the croqueting, crocheting kind
Of girls ; for they fulfil their lot
Like flowers which want no subtle mind,
But waft their sweetness on the wind,
And flash their beauty on the eye,
And bloom, and ripen, and then die ;
And they are lovely, and we are blind
If we think that the world is not better thereby.

Maybe I am not just to them ;
Maybe I ask more mind and heart ;
Maybe a woman, like a gem,
Is but a bawble of precious art,

And as a toy should play her part.
God meant her for an helpmeet true,
But men have quite another view :

Let her bright eyes like diamonds dart,
And she may be hard as the diamond too.

Yet one may harden, he avers,
By thought as well as thoughtlessness ;
And women's minds may equal theirs,
Have wit as keen, nor reason less ;
Only they will not bear the stress
Of manly toil, and keep the good
Pure quality of womanhood :

And logic is not more than dress
For the sweetening of life in its weary mood.

The Herr Professor speaks indeed
Many odd quips and crusty jokes.
He vows that I have too much creed
To have much faith, and daily shocks

My thought with some mad paradox ;
And in the ancient truth he sees
But an old bunch of rusty keys

Hung at the belt of the Orthodox,
To open a dungeon which they call Peace.

And yet I know he loveth much,
And walks with God in truth and right ;
And if the world had many such,
It were indeed a world of light,
All radiant with a glory bright :
And sometimes, in his quaintest words,
He seems to touch the deepest chords,
And with a master's skill and might
Holds high discourse of the Lord of lords.

But, psha ! what matters what he thinks ?
And yet why do my thoughts still veer,
As drawn to him by subtle links
Of yearning hope, and trembling fear

How in his sight I shall appear?
And wherefore do I watch for him
In the elm-tree walk at evening dim,
As he comes singing loud and clear
A Burschen song or a Luther hymn?

Can this be love? and could I charge
Thorold that he would by and by
Love with a love more deep and large
Than sister's love could satisfy?
And all the while, alas! was I
But taxing him to hide my own
Lapse into passionate depths unknown?
Nay, but this foolish thought would die
If I were not left here brooding alone.

And yet I know not. Heretofore
I used to bring my thoughts to book,
And opened every chamber door,
And searched my soul through every nook;

But into this I shrank to look :

It came with silent, owly flight

In the still quiet of the night ;

I heard the wind, I heard the brook,

But the love slid into my soul like light.

And when I found it nestling there,

Like swallow twittering in the eaves,

It felt like summer warm and fair,

And blossomy spray, and fragrant leaves.

A cosey nest my bright bird weaves, —

My bird which is but a German swallow,

Guttural-speaking, big and sallow :

Only his heart with great thought heaves,

And there's naught in him little or poor or shallow.

Am I ashamed to say I love,

Yet proud of him I love so well?

O strange proud shame! yet hand and glove

Could fit no better, truth to tell.

I used to laugh at girls who fell
Blushing and lying time about,
And sware I would love out and out,
Or not at all; yet now the spell
Holds me in transport and terror and doubt.

What can it mean, this love and fear,
This open shame and secret pride,
The yearning gladness, and the tear
That comes so often by its side;
This thought we fondle while we hide,
This trembling dread when he is late,
And pouting joy that makes him wait,
And passion passionately denied,
And the feeling of overmastering Fate?

I will to Thorold's room. Nay, that
I may not. Last night I went there,
And the pale moon in silence sat
So ghostly on the great arm-chair,

And the mice pattered here and there,
And the wind in the chimney moaned,
And the old pine at the window groaned,
And something stepped the creaking stair.
I dare not sit in the room he owned.

Come back, come back, my brother dear :
The storm is gathering on thy way,
And mine is no more calm and clear ;
The mist is creeping dull and gray
O'er surfy beach and troubled bay,
And I am friendless and alone,
And doubtful of myself, with none
To counsel me ; and day by day
Fear is chilling my heart like stone.

Am I grown fanciful, to muse
On school-girl whimsies foolishly ?
What should I fear, except to lose
The great true heart that loveth me

Better than I deserve to be,
With tender strength and manly care,
And modest hope his lot to share,
And share his thoughts, too, high and free,
And bear all the burden which he must bear?

To mine own soul let me be true ;
I love my love by night and day,
I love my love, — the sound is new,
But O, how sweet it is to say !
I love my love, — it is like play,
But yet I love with heart and mind,
And passion trembling, fond and blind ;
I love my love in Love's old way,
And ever in loving new life I find.

I cannot rest ; he cometh not ;
And yet, a little while ago,
What wildest fancy could have thought
A day of tumult and of woe

Among the peoples, stricken low,
Who rose up in a wrath divine,
On Seine, the Danube, and the Rhine,
Would shoot, in that volcanic glow,
A flame from their heart to kindle mine?

I should as soon have looked to see
Some bright star from the stormy heaven
Glide down to earth, and rest on me,
From all its glorious comrades riven.
So strangely fates are interwoven!
And how he loves his Deutsch-land dear,
Its patient thought, that knows no fear,
Its Luther, Goethe, Heine, given
For lights to the ages far and near.

I will go forth. The moonlight dim
Dusks with broad shade the silent hill;
I will go up, and think of him,
Where the old brook is tinkling still,

With memories of our water-mill ;—
I think he sometimes strolls that way,
With pipe and book at evening gray ;
But memories of childhood will
Pleasantly wind up a weary day.

Book Third.

Editorial.

Lady Anne Dewhurst on a crimson couch
Lay, with a rug of sable o'er her knees,
In a bright boudoir in Belgravia ;
Most perfectly arrayed in shapely robe
Of sumptuous satin, lit up here and there
With scarlet touches, and with costly lace
Nice-fingered maidens knotted in Brabant :
And all around her spread magnificence
Of bronzes, Sèvres vases, marquetrie,
Rare buhl, and bric-à-brac of every kind,
From Rome and Paris and the centuries
Of far-off beauty. All of goodly color,
Or graceful form that could delight the eye,

In orderly disorder lay around,
And flowers with perfume scented the warm air.

Stately and large and beautiful she was,
Spite of her sixty summers, with an eye
Trained to soft languors, that could also flash
Keen as a sword and sharp,—a black bright eye,
Deep sunk beneath an arch of jet. She had
A weary look, and yet the weariness
Seemed not so native as the worldliness
Which blended with it. Weary and worldly, she
Had quite resigned herself to misery
In this sad vale of tears, but fully meant
To nurse her sorrow in a sumptuous fashion,
And make it an expensive luxury ;
For nothing she esteemed that nothing cost.

Beside her, on a table round, inlaid
With precious stones by Roman art designed,
Lay phials, scents, a novel, and a Bible,

A pill-box and a wineglass, and a book
On the Apocalypse ; for she was much
Addicted unto physic and religion,
And her physician had prescribed for her
Jellies and wines and cheerful literature.
The book on the Apocalypse was writ
By her chosen pastor, and she took the novel
With the dry sherry, and the pills prescribed.
A gorgeous, pious, comfortable life
Of misery she lived ; and all the sins
Of all her house, and all the nation's sins,
And all shortcomings of the Church and State,
And all the sins of all the world beside,
Bore as her special cross, confessing them
Vicariously day by day, and then
She comforted her heart, which needed it,
With bric-à-brac and jelly and old wine.

Beside the fire, her elbow on the mantle,
And forehead resting on her finger-tips,

Shading a face where sometimes loomed a frown,
And sometimes flashed a gleam of bitter scorn,
Her daughter stood; no more a graceful girl,
But in the glory of her womanhood,
Stately and haughty. One who might have been
A noble woman in a nobler world,
But now was only woman of her world,
With just enough of better thought to know
It was not noble, and despise it all,
And most herself for making it her all.
A woman, complex, intricate, involved;
Wrestling with self, yet still by self subdued;
Scorning herself for being what she was,
And yet unable to be that she would;
Uneasy with the sense of possible good
Never attained, nor sought, except in fits
Ending in failures; conscious, too, of power
Which found no purpose to direct its force,
And so came back upon herself, and grew
An inward fret. The caged bird sometimes dashed

Against the wires, and sometimes sat and pined,
But mainly pecked her sugar, and eyed her glass,
And trilled her graver thoughts away in song.

Mother and daughter, — yet a childless mother,
And motherless her daughter ; for the world
Had gashed a chasm between, impassable,
And they had naught in common, neither love,
Nor hate, nor anything except a name.
Yet both were of the world ; and she not least
Whose world was the religious one, and stretched
A kind of isthmus 'tween the Devil and God,
A slimy, oozy mud, where mandrakes grew,
Ghastly, with intertwined roots, and things
Amphibious haunted, and the leathern bat
Flickered about its twilight evermore.

Loquitur Mater Domina.

SO there you are at last. Please, draw
That odious curtain, will you? Do.

A hideous thing as e'er I saw!

It gives one such a corpse-like hue.

But I might be a corpse for you:

It's little any of you cares

How your heart-broken mother fares,

Burdened with sorrows old and new,

As the world entangles you all in its snares.

Please, no excuse: it does no good.

Of course, you have your morning calls,

Your shopping, and your listless mood

After late dinners, drums, and balls;

My world is these four weary walls,
My body, but an aching back,
My life, a torture on the rack,
My thoughts, like dizzying waterfalls
That never will silence, or change, or slack.

I get my jellies, soups, and stews,
My little wine, — what need I more?
My morning paper with the news
That everybody knew before.
I hear the street calls, and the roar
Of the town traffic, and the clash
Of milk-bells, and the angry crash
Of brass bands, and the drowsy snore
Of an organ as dull as the flat sea-wash.

And then the night falls, and the clock
Ticks on the mantel, and the wheels
Crunch the hard gravel, as the flock
Of weary revellers homeward reels,

Until the opal morning steals
Up in the sky. So, day by day,
My life crawls on its dreary way ;
No hope it stirs, no joy it feels ;
But it's all like a foggy November day :

A gray fog in the early prime,
A blue fog by the breakfast-hour,
A saffron fog at luncheon-time,
At dinner a persistent shower
Of smut, and then a dismal power
Of choking darkness and despair
Thickening and soddening all the air :—
But we are all a fading flower,
And life is a burden of sorrow and care.

I don't complain ; it is the lot
Appointed me by wisdom best :
'T is meet that I should be forgot
By all of you, and learn to rest

Content, while ye have mirth and jest,
And I religion. Still I feel ;
I hide the wounds I cannot heal,
I keep my sorrow unexpressed, —
But I'm not quite so hard as a lump of steel.

My nerves are not just wires and cords,
I'm not a mere rhinoceros
Where arrows stick as in deal boards,
And bullets fall as soft as moss.
My patient heart can bear its cross,
And bleed unseen, — but still it bleeds,
And all the more that no one heeds,
And all the more to see your loss
Of all sound religious views and creeds.

O, were I only dead and gone !

It's hard to live, and see the way
That all of you are hurrying on
Blindly unto the dreadful day.

You prate of fossils, while I pray,
And beetles occupy your heart
More than its own Immortal part :

Your father's hairs are turning gray,
In this impious babble of science and art.

Poor fools ! that fain would break a spear
With Moses and the Pentateuch,
And only blinded reason hear,
And will no revelation brook,
Nor miracle nor inspirèd Book !
But for some sweet refreshing showers
Of doctrine, during Sabbath hours,
'T would break my heart on you to look ;
But the Book and Day are still happily ours.

Ah ! what were life without the Book ?
And what this world without its story ?
And what were man, if he forsook
The Sabbath, foretaste of heaven's glory ?

A den of wild beasts, dark and gory!
A being quite devoid of grace,
A heathen with a tattooed face,

That burns his widows! I implore you,
Set your heart, Rose, in the proper place.

But you have no religion, — none.

It is the heart that's wrong, my dear:
If you had not a heart of stone,

You could not leave me lonely here.

And men may do who have not clear
Decided views; they go about

The Clubs, and hear who's in and out,

And which is "Favorite" this year,
And bet, and are dreadfully wicked, no doubt.

But women who have lost their Faith

Are angels who have lost their wings,
And always have a nasty breath

Of chemistry, and horrid things

That go off when a lecturer rings
His bell. — But *they* will not go off;
They take a mission or a cough;
For 'men will marry a fool that sings
Sooner than one that has learnt to scoff.

You don't believe me : you go in
For science, culture, common sense,
And think a woman sure to win
Because she knows the why and whence,
And looks at vermin through a lens :
And yet you've seen a score of girls
With empty heads, and silly curls,
And laughter light, and judgment dense,
Wedded to Marquises, Dukes, and Earls.

And why? They started fair with you :
You dressed as well, — for that was mine ;
You were as handsome and well-born, too,
And you had wit like sparkling wine :

But they all took to things divine
Like sober, pious girls. I know
That some were High Church, and would go,
Like nuns, with beads and crosses fine,—
But they all were wives in a season or so.

Men may be bad, but still they like
A pious wife that lives for heaven ;
Your wit may shine, your beauty strike,
But not to these their love is given.
Ah ! had you with your Prayer-Book driven
To church, and kept a Sunday-school,
And visited, and lived by rule—
But that is past and all forgiven,
Though you played your cards like a perfect fool.

You cannot be a hypocrite,
To mumble out a false remorse,
And wear a look of prim conceit
Only to be the winning horse?—

Of course you cannot, and of course
I never meant you should. But yet,
You might feel true grief and regret
For sin ; and could be none the worse
For the strawberry leaves in a coronet.

You wonder at me, with my views
Of doctrine sound, and worship pure,
That I should plead the least excuse
For girls whom Romish arts allure,
Through Ritualism to Babylon sure.
But did I say their views were right?
Or did I call their darkness light?
Or did I only try to cure
Your heart, which is turned from the Gospel quite?

It's grace you need, Rose, to illumine
Your darkened nature. What an age
Since I have seen you in my room!
Though I have nothing to engage

My thoughts, except the sacred page,
And that sweet book which is so clear
Upon the Beast and his numbered year:—

Yet all the while there's quite a rage
For some wonderful May-fair novel, I hear.

And after all I have done for you!—

But daughters are not what they were,
And you are only proving true

What all the Prophets do aver.

O, had you heard our minister
Upon The Signs of the End, and how
The children of the saints shall grow

Still wickeder and wickeder!—

Till all to the Beast and the Woman shall bow.

That is the worst part of my trial:

But prophecy must be fulfilled,
And we are in the Seventh Vial,
The Witnesses will soon be killed,

And all the land with blood be filled
And Papists ; and a cruel fate
Shall separate the Church and State,
And then more blood is to be spilled
By the Frogs, — that's your Radical friends of late.

It's clear the Woman and the Beast
Are Buonaparté and the Pope ;
The Prophets won't explain the least
Without them ; they're the merest rope
Of sand in that case : and I hope
I know my Bible. Still the Book
Is sealed, and you shall vainly look
To find its meaning and its scope,
If the Jews don't return, and the Pentateuch.

Ah ! we had such a sermon on it ! —

The Vicar's wife she was not there ;
She had not got her new spring bonnet —
But all the world was. Do you care

For the new mode? You blondes must wear
Pink, shaped like tiny little shells ;
So natural ! with silver bells. —

But that great sermon ! I declare,
I can't for the world think of anything else.

So searching and pathetic ! He
Soaked two clean handkerchiefs in tears,
While clearing up the prophecy,
The mystic number, and the years,
And Daniel ; and it still appears
That this Napoleon is the Beast
That was and wasn't, you know : at least
The Armageddon swords and spears
Were long ago shipped from Marseilles to the East.

Nay, tell me not you do not care
Although the end of the world were come.
It's very wicked to despair ;
You should be gentle, patient, dumb,

Thinking that any day the hum
Of myriad angels, saintly crowds,
With rainbow trimmings round their shrouds,
May greet you at a kettle-drum,
Coming in glory among the clouds.

We live in wondrous times ; such times
The world has never seen before ;
With earthquakes in the tropic climes,
And kingdoms shaken to the core,
And revolutions at our door ;
And Kings and Queens discrowned appear
In London every other year,
While Barons clothed in rags implore
You to buy pens and sealing-wax dreadful dear.

And Ritualists our Church defile,
And Rationalists our faith deny,
And Papist nuns and chaplains wile
Our very thieves in jail. And I

Went to a chapel once hard by,
And heard a Non-conformist say
The Sabbath was a mere Jewish day!

I left, of course, and had to fly
In the rain, but I hailed a cab by the way.

And there's your "Robertson of Brighton,"
He's lying now on every table,
With "Ecce Homo" to enlighten
Our carnal hearts, and minds unstable.

We have no anchor now or cable;
Our admirable Liturgy,
Our very Bible, is not free
From criticism lamentable;
And everybody is all at sea.

What next? The land is rotten quite,
And infidel and Papist too:
There's Gladstone ruled by Mr. Bright,
The very Bishops hardly true,

And the Queen knows not what to do.
But prophecy is coming clear,
The awful end is drawing near,
And bitterly this land will rue
The way it has treated the Jews, I fear.

Last week our Vicar plainly told —
He's a converted Jew, I know —
How seven fine ladies should lay hold
Even on the man that cries "Old Clo',"
To save them in the day of woe ;
And proved it from the Prophets clear.
So then I thought I'd ask you, dear, —
The poor man looked so shabby and low, —
If you knew any Jew of the better class here.

For though all Israel shall be saved,
And all the lost tribes found again,
And all be proper and well behaved,
And all be free from sorrow and pain ;

Yet even in heaven, it is quite plain,
As stars with different glory shine,
There shall be people poor and fine,
For perfect order there shall reign :
And one would not like to go over the line.

You did not come to speak of Jews —
They're Charlie's friends, and he can tell ;
Nor yet about the Vicar's views
Of millennarian heaven or hell :—
My dear, that's hardly spoken well.
But what, then, did you come about ?
A call, a lecture, or a rout ?
A flower, a beetle, or a shell ?
Or a prodigy found in some country lout ?

Eh ! What say you ? That puling boy
With the Scotch brogue and hungry look ?
Your genius whom you made a toy
Last winter at your drums, and took

About with you by hook or crook !
Tush, tush ! I do not like your set :
But what's come of the baronet ?
As for the writer of a book,
You're not come quite to the curates yet.

O yes, you love him ; that's of course :
It's your fifth season, is n't it, dear ?
But really you are little worse :—
And I am sure you loved last year
Sir Wilfred with his rent-roll clear.—
A person at St. John's Wood ? Shame !
No proper girl should ever name
A person there or person here ;
And, no doubt, she is the one to blame.

They always are, these creatures. Ah !
This wicked world we're living in !
There should be some severer law
For low-born creatures who would win

Youth over to the ways of sin.
But there's that shameful Act which frees
Their vice from want and from disease,
Although they neither toil nor spin, —
Right in the face of all heaven's decrees.

It's shameful, shocking ; quite enough
To bring down on us wrath divine ;
I don't care for their facts and stuff,
I won't believe a single line.
I know it's sin. And I opine
Gladstone our morals means to sap,
And then, his wickedness to cap,
The House of Lords he'll undermine
And bring in the Pope like a thunder-clap.

All men are dreadful wicked. Sad
It is to say it ; but it's true ;
You hardly would believe how bad ;
So bad that it would never do

If girls before their marriage knew.
And if you will be prude and nice
And will go poking into vice,
And shying when it comes in view,
You will never be married at any price.

Now, hear me, Rose : give up at once
Your silly fancy for this boy
Whom you have led an idle dance,
I dare say, only to annoy
Sir Wilfred ; and for once employ
The arts that others use for sin
His erring heart again to win
Back to a purer life and joy,
Which you're certain to do if you'll just begin.

Be patient now ; leave all to me ;
Don't fly off in a girlish huff.
You'll need a new dress, — let me see, —
Of some soft, lustrous, dainty stuff ;

Made Christian-like and low enough, —
You did not get a bust like this
To hide like some raw country miss, —
Say poplin of a delicate buff;
With Honiton lace, for a taste like his;

You never yet knew how to dress,
You never have a gown to fit,
Your things are always in a mess
That's shocking, even to look at it;
Your colors somehow never hit,
They never match themselves nor you;
They're always out of fashion too;
And as for gloves, you must admit
They're just the one thing that you cannot do.

Anyhow, leave all that to me.

Could I but see you settled well,
As, sure, my daughter ought to be,
I'd die in peace unspeakable.

Why am I here? why do I dwell
In this unhappy world? unless
To help my children, and express
Undying faith in principle,—
Though I don't like your baronet's quite, I confess.

He wants to open the Museum
Upon the blessed Sabbath-day;
He wants the bands to play "Te Deum"
When we should go to church and pray;
It will be masses next, I say;—
His views of sin are far from sound;
Eternal punishment, I found,
He will not hear of; and his way
Is altogether on dangerous ground.

But then, woe's me! you're all the same;
All turned from Bible-teaching quite,
All snared in folly, sin, and shame,
And blinded to the only light.

And he at least is of the right
Old blood, and has an income nice,
And never touches cards or dice
Or horses. It's a happy sight,
A man of his rank with a single vice.

It's wonderful, most wonderful,
The times we're living in! And yet
We're born, and christened, and go to school,
And marry Lord or Baronet,
And dress and dine, and vex and fret,
And strive the tide of Fate to stem
Which Prophets had revealed to them,
And never think the times are set
For the Jews' going back to Jerusalem.

The Prophets say that there shall be
A Highway and a Way: we read
Also of ships upon the sea,
Made of bulrushes; and we need,

Unless you think I 'm blind indeed,
Unless I 'm blinder than a bat,
No prophet to interpret that,

With a steamboat running at full speed
On the Suez Canal, like a water-rat.

There could not be a clearer sign
That now the end draws near in view,
And that it's Providence' design
To bring deliverance to the Jew,
And break their bonds. — Now, shame on you!
To scoff with your unhallowed wit;
There's almost blasphemy in it:—

I don't mean bonds of I O U,
Such as Charlie gives when he's badly hit.

But wherefore speak of things like these
To things like you, who heed no more
The murmur of prophetic breeze
Than creaking of a rusty door?

You walk along the solemn shore
Washed by the tide of awful doom,
While lights and shadows flash and gloom,
And neither wonder nor adore,
But stamp and “pshaw” through the drawing-room.

Book Fourth.



Editorial.

I will not answer for my wife's reports ;
Quite true, no doubt, in the main, as true at least
As the most excellent women can report
People they don't much like ; not meant to bear
Lawyer's cross-questioning, which they detest
With a good conscience, conscious that they speak
True to the idea, if the facts hang loose
At one point, at another have been joined
Ingeniously. Men are so troublesome !
Rose was not faultless, as her lovers swore,
Nor yet so faulty as my Hester thought :
Women judge women hardly ; hit perchance
The likeness true enough by instinct keen

That, piecing trivial incidents, detects
The soul of character ; but they have no shading,
No softening tints, no generous allowance
For circumstance, to make the picture human,
And true because so human. Rose was human ;
And for a woman born of such a mother,
And for a woman reared in such a world,
And for a woman dowered with queenly beauty
Set out for sale, and buzzed by flatterers
All her lifelong, was even womanly,
And better truly than she might have been.

So stately as she left my lady's chamber,
Her full eyes flashing scorn, yet with her scorn
Contending to retain a mother still,
If no more shrined in natural reverence,
Yet cloaked with charity. But in the hall
Her heart failed, and she pressed her forehead flushed
On the cold fluting of a marble pillar,
And wept to feel her life so desolate,

And wept still more because the world had made it
So desolate, yet was the world her all ;
She loathed it, but she knew it was her all.
Thus she with passionate rebellion wept,
Printing the fluted pillar on her brow,
And then with weary, lifeless steps she went
Heavily to her father's chamber door.

The Squire was banished to a little room
That overlooked a paved court and a mews.
A small, close chamber, lined with dusty books
And dingy maps ; and savage crania
Grinned from high shelves, with clubs and arrow-heads
And tools of flint, and shields of hide embossed.
There were great cobwebs on the windows dim,
Where bloated spiders watched their webs, and heard
The blue-fly knock his head against the pane,
And buzz about their snares. And through the room,
On table and chair, were globes and glasses tall,
Retorts and crucibles, electric jars

And batteries, and microscopes and prisms
And balances, and fossil plants and shells,
Disorderly and dusty; and the floor
Was carpeted with papers and thick dust,—
Papers and books and instruments and dust.

A gray old man sat in that dim gray room
Wrapt in a dressing-gown of soft gray stuff,
And puzzling o'er a paper wearily
Of circles, squares, and pentagons, and lines
Of logarithms, he strove to disentangle.
He was a little, brisk, bald-headed man,
With fiery eyes, and forehead narrow and high
And far-retiring: one who could have led
A regiment to the belching cannon's mouth
If wisely ordered when; or might have headed
The cheery hunt across the stubble field,
Taking the fences gallantly, nor turning
From the wide brook to seek the safer ford.
But being held in London half the year,

And with no taste for politics or fashion,
Or such religion as he came across,
He took to Science, made experiments,
Bought many nice and costly instruments,
Heard lectures, and believed he understood
Beetle-browed Science wrestling with the fact
To find its meaning clear ; but all in vain.
He thought he thought, and yet he did not think,
But only echoed still the common thought,
As might an empty room. The forehead high
And fiery eye had no reflection in them
To brood and hatch the secret of the world.
He could but skim and dip, like restless swallow
Fly-catching on the surface of all knowledge
Anthropologic and Botanical
And Chemical, and what was last set forth
By charlatan to stun the vulgar sense.
But yet a strain of noble chivalry
Ran through his nature, and a faint crisp humor
Rippled his thought, and would have been a joy

Had life been kindlier ; but his cheeriest smile
Verged on a sneer, and ran to mocking laughter.
Yet under all his pottering at science,
And deeper than his feeble cynic sneer,
Lay a great love, to which he fondly clung,
For Rose, the stately daughter of his house.

Loquitur Pater.

I WILL not hear of it. No more ;
Besides, I'm busy, as I said ;
You come and knock, knock at my door,
And drive all thought clean from my head,
Just when at last I've caught the thread,
Subtle and brittle and sought for long,
That would most surely bind a throng
Of facts together, firmly wed
By doctrine of Science clear and strong.

I labor and experiment,
I methodize and meditate,
I watch the bias and the bent
Of the mind's idols. Still I wait

And verify and speculate,
When rat-tat-tat! my mind's a blank,
My thread of thought, a tangled hank,
My ordered facts, confusion great;—
And it's always you women I have to thank.

You've heard of Newton's dog that spoiled
The calculations of long years,
And of that brutish maid whose soiled
And sooty fingers used the tears
Of genius and its hopes and fears,
Page after page, to light her fire,—
A horrible and impious pyre!
So all my labored thought appears
To melt, like the snow, into slush and mire.

I say it's worse than Suttee, or
The sacrifice of beautiful youth,
This waste of thought long waited for,
This fruitless birth of still-born truth.

What matters for the silly, smooth,
Meaningless face of widow trim,
Slow roasting to a drowsy hymn?

But you do rob the world in sooth,
When the lights of Science are quenched or dim.

Is't not enough to have your maids
Scrubbing and brooming at my door,
With whispers shrill, and sudden raids
On cobwebs that have taught me more
Wisdom and beauty than a score
Of chattering girls? Only last night
I found my favorite beetle quite
Crushed and mangled upon the floor;
And the jade held to it she did quite right.

A plague on maids! and him who first
Invented them! They're all the same.

I've tried them saucy, tried them curst,

I've tried them sluts, and tried to tame

Their natural instincts, and to shame
Their ignorance, and to abate
Their furious and unfeeling hate
Of fellow-creatures ; but my claim
Was vain as appeal to the wheels of Fate.

Whate'er they do not understand
Is dirt, and must be brushed away ;
They'd broom all science from the land,
And scour from heaven the Milky Way.
I plan by night, I work by day
With chemic and electric Force,
And tremble as I watch the course
Of nature ; all in vain, for they
Baffle in some way my best resource.

And now you come, like all the rest,
My daughter, but a woman still,
My daughter, whom I thought the best
Of possible daughters, trained with skill,

And schooled in Science to fulfil
The part of Cuvier's daughter true ;
And when I hope and trust in you,
You fall in love, and coo and bill,
And want to know what I mean to do.

Of course, the fellow came to me,
And talked of marriage, love, and trash,
As if he thought I did not see
He meant just settlements and cash.
But there's my banker gone to smash,
Shares fallen to nothing, farmers' rents
Begged off, and half my three per cents
Gone to save Charlie from a smash ;
And where is the money for settlements?

O yes! HE did not care for that,
HE did not woo you for your gold,
HE wished for nothing, cared not what
You brought or did not bring him ; told

His means and prospects, and was bold
To think that love like his and yours
Would work miraculous works and cures,
Keep you from hunger, debt, and cold,
And all the evils that man endures.

The old story, Rose ; the silly stuff
Of fools and beggars superfine !
Why ! he has hardly means enough
To keep you in gloves and flowers and wine.
You could not dress, you could not dine,
You could not keep a maid or horse,
Or drive but in a cab, or worse ;—
The man's a fool ; no child of mine
Could marry a beggar like him, of course.

I marvel at his impudence ;
A fellow with some paltry three
Hundred a year ! A grain of sense —
But that he has n't — had made him see

The silliness of plaguing me.
His genius and his prospects? Well;
Can you eat prospects? Will they sell?
And will his trumpery genius be
A dinner, or only a dinner-bell?

There, there; don't cry; I do not mean
He is not all that you would say,—
A handsome fellow, as I've seen,
And true and modest in his way:
And it is hard to say you nay;
Yet why should your old father lose
His one ewe-lamb? Why should he choose
To steal my only joy away,
Since Charlie went to the dogs and Jews?

And that reminds me, Charlie says
Your friend's a screw, and awful close:
But then he's poor, and no doubt pays
His way, which Charlie never does.

That makes a difference, for those
May freely give and lend, whose purse
Is shut to all their creditors.

I wish I knew their secret, Rose,
How never to pay, and be never the worse.

Well, yes; I liked him, as you say,
And praised him to my friends; and he
May wed their daughters any day

He likes,—that's no concern to me.

But this I could not bear to see,
My Rose stuck in his buttonhole,
And shunned, like any stained soul,
By a world that hates all poverty,—
And the world is perfectly right, on the whole.

But tush! with marriage and affiance;
The Medium waits me at the door,
That Pythoness of modern science,
Who brings back Intellect once more

To hear and wonder and adore.
She photographed by electric light
My old Grandmother's ghost last night,
The very cap and wig she wore,
While the spirit sat by me there bolt upright.

I did not see Her ; but I saw
The portrait like as like could be,
And felt a kind of creeping awe,
And old religion back in me ;
A hand was laid upon my knee,
And there was music in the air,
The very song she whiled my care
Away with in my infancy ;
And she lives in some kind of a sphere somewhere.

And conscience twitched me, like a spasm,
For hitherto I had no faith
In anything but protoplasm ;
I held that spirit was but breath,

And all the Future silent death.
And what, if Science shall restore
The faith it robbed me of before?
For call it spirit, ghost, or wraith,
One was there who did not come in by the door.

It's wonderful what now we do ;
This is a mighty age indeed,
With march of Intellect so true,
From prejudice and bondage freed,
And pious fraud, and worn-out creed !
We weigh the farthest stars in scales,
We comprehend the wandering gales,
We summon spirits at our need
From the shadowy world which love bewails.

I don't deny that, heretofore,
The spirits have not much to tell,
That Shakespeare's something of a bore,
That Milton prosed about Hell,

That Scott has lost his wizard spell,
That Plato has forgot his Greek,
That Byron's dull, and Goethe weak ;
But, then, deal tables could not well
Utter the thoughts *they* might wish to speak.

We wait for better instruments, —
Wind harps to suit the spirit hand,
Sweet lutes to place beside the rents
In the dim walls of the spirit-land.
No Maestro with his cunning wand
Beethoven's symphonies could get -
From bones and bagpipes. We are yet
But groping 'mong the secrets grand
Of the mystic spiritual Alphabet.

At any rate, this is the age
Of miracles proper, — wonders done
By careful reading the dark page
Of Nature, searching one by one

Her secrets till there shall be none.
And he who reads them is the true
Prophet-Apostle of this new
Annus mirabilis, whose sun
Shines its great light now on me and you.

Wonders of Science! marvels high,
Beyond our wildest dream or hope,
Found in the sunlight and the sky
By spectroscope and telescope!
Miracles in a dirty drop
Of water from a stagnant pool!
And every lichen'd rock is full
Of history; and there's a crop
Of marvels now in a table or stool!

Now, go to your mother, Rose, she'll give
Excellent counsel in Heaven's name;
Right worldly wisdom, as I live,
And all in pious phrase and frame.

I wish I knew that little game,
It is a secret worth the knowing,
To clothe with Scripture language glowing
The Devil's plain common sense, and claim
The Word of truth for the truth's o'erthrowing.

What? You have only come from her?

Well, I'm a beast, a perfect brute,
To fret and fume and stamp and stir

With fretful word, and angry foot,

While my poor girl stands still and mute.

With that taste in her mouth, where all

Nauseous bitters scriptural

Are mingled by a branch-and-root

Right Low Church Evangelical.

But come, now, tell me what she said.

Yet what needs asking that? Of course,
Her heart was broken, and she prayed

For Death to come on his pale horse,

And all the world was waxing worse ;
And then she blamed your wicked views,
And touched upon the elected Jews
Going to Zion back in force,—
And they can't go sooner than I would choose.

And still beneath the grieving saint,
You found the nether millstone hard ;
She 's not a fool, nor given to faint,
But maundered nonsense by the yard,
Until she had you off your guard,
Then lisped soft words that stung you sore,
And hints that maddened you still more.
You bit the peach and for reward
Cracked your teeth on the stony core.

I know it all ; the winding stream
Of pious babble linked along,
As loose as some fantastic dream,
Oblivious of all right and wrong,

Here swirling round in eddies strong
'Neath twisted roots of old dead thought,
There slushing among mud and rot,
And chill as salt and snow among
The tremblings of feeling highly wrought.

Our modern science has not left
A leg for faith to stand upon ;
Of all its miracles bereft,
Its history to myth all gone ;
Yet would it surely hold its own
But for that nether millstone bit
That lieth in the heart of it.
A little mercy would atone
For failure of reason, and lack of wit.

She is your mother, and my wife?
Well, yes! and may be I have been
No wise guide for a troubled life,
To lead it to the peace serene.

A brighter girl was never seen ;
There 's none of you that may compare,
A moment, with her beauty rare,
Her perfect sense, and insight keen. —
How she headed the hunt on that wild black mare !

Ah ! well ; that 's past. And I am vexed
If I have added to your pain.
I did not mean it. I 'm perplexed
With Charlie's gambling debts again.
Do what I will, 't is all in vain :
He plays to-night, and prays to-morrow,
Now tries to preach, and now to borrow
Among the Jews ; and then is fain
To come to me when he comes to sorrow.

Now, kiss me, Rose, and let me go ;
And put this business quite away
Out of your thoughts. You surely know
'T is easier far for me to say

A yea to any one than nay ;
And yea to thee was pleasant still,
And nay, against my heart and will ;
But it would quench my light of day,
If aught should happen to thee of ill.

Even when you leave me for a home,
Happy and honored, it will be
The last bright day shall ever come
With sunshine to my home and me ;
And the years afterwards will flee
Like drift of dry and barren sand
Along the shore, between the land
And the low moaning of the sea
That creeps with the gray mist, hand in hand.

If you had loved with love supreme,
Which to itself is all in all ;
If you were lapt in blissful dream,
Which wakens not at any call,

But still loves on whate'er befall ;
If worldly custom, pride, and show,
And all your wonted life might flow
Past you unheeded, and the small
Tattle of fools, like the winds that blow ;

If I could think you loved like this,
And had no half-heart for the world,
If perfect Love were perfect bliss,
Whose spotless flag you had unfurled,
And its serene defiance hurled
At toil, contempt, and hardships great, —
But you have ne'er confronted Fate :
Your love is rosy, scented, curled,
And dreams of a carriage, and man to wait.

My dear, you know it not ; but yet
That is the truth ; I've read your heart :
You are no heroine ; you would fret
To play a common, obscure part,

To watch the coming baker's cart,
To tremble at the butcher's bill,
To patch and darn and hem, and still
To make yourself look neat and smart
In a twopenny print and a muslin frill.

There's nothing of the hero, Rose,
In any of us. We could fight,
I dare say, if it came to blows,
Almost like the old Norman knight
Who won our lands,—Heaven bless his might!
We could not win them if we tried,—
We can but shoot and fish and ride,
And lightly spend what came so light,
And I don't know we can do aught beside.

Indeed, you must not think of it.

For us there's naught but commonplace.
A dinner good, a dress to fit,
A ride to hunt, a pretty face,

Old wine, old china, and old lace .
We can no more. I've tried to know
Science, but Science will not show
Her secrets to the trifling race
Of Dilettanti, brisk or slow.

You don't like this, you don't like that ;
You don't like horsy-hunting squires,
You don't like parsons sleek and fat,
You don't like those whose only fires
Are the quenched ashes of their sires :
Nor do you love this Thorold so,
That you with him, like Eve, would go
Into a world of thorns and briers,
Glad to be with him in weal or woe.

That is the curse upon us, Rose ;
We cannot dare a noble fate,
And yet our hearts find no repose
In all our empty show and state :

We can be neither small nor great ;
With strong desire and feeble power
We hanker through our weary hour,
Like flowers that try to blossom late,
In a sickly struggle with frost and shower.

Our race is run : the Norman knight
Is distanced by the engineer ;
The cotton-spinner beats us quite
When all the battle is to clear
A hundred thousand pounds a year :
That is the glory of our age,
Six figures on the Ledger's page, —
And no bad glory either, dear,
As glory goes among saint and sage.

Our life is all a poor illusion,
And nothing is that seems to be ;
Our knowledge only breeds confusion,
Our love is moonshine on the sea,

Our faith is but the shadow we
Cast on the cloud that bounds our view ;
And to be virtuous and true
Is trouble, plague, and misery,
If we have not the funds when the bills come due.

Book Fifth.



Editorial.

Dressed, like a penitent, in sombre black
That hung about her limp and scrimp, and all
Without relief of ribbon, lace, or tucker,
Collar, or cuff, or any lightsome thing ;
Her hair, that wont in regal braid to fold
A shining coronet around her brow,
Stuffed loosely in a net ; nor ring nor jewel
Gracing the hand that trembled as it lifted
A book, a pencil, or an ornament,
And could not help but lift them ; so arrayed,
A nun-like woman over all dull and sad,
In tragic dress of studied negligence,
Which covered not the less a tragic pain, —
For there are souls that live in symbolisms,

And are most true in most dramatic seeming, —
Thus Rose awaited for the sacrifice.

She could not rest, but paced about the room ;
Now drawing curtains close, to dim the light ;
Now watching the slow movement of the clock,
Uncertain whether to chide its tardy pace,
Or its unfeeling haste ; now sitting down,
Holding her side, or white, spasm-choking throat ;
And anon starting up to stamp and frown,
With flashing look defiant, saying, “ I will ” ;
But soon she drooped her head, and sobbed, “ I
cannot ;

God, pity me, a creature pitiful ;
I dare not say, God help me, for this business
Is one he cannot help in. I am to choose
Deliberately the mean life I have proven,
And knowing it so hollow, heartless, vain,
And knowing, too, the better life of love,
And knowing it may break a noble heart,

And make mine own a lean and barren heart,
I am to seal a covenant with darkness,
And sign mine own death-warrant. Can I do it?
Is there no hope, no other way but this,
As they all tell me?—how I hate them all!
Why was there none to back my better thought,
And help the struggling spirit to do right?
O Father, mother, brother, why do all
Forsake me? ply me so with reasons strong
To play the baser part? Was ever girl
So hard beset with preachers of a lie?
Was ever girl so drawn by cords of love
To break the cord of Love? Or can it be,
As they do all aver, and I myself
Half feel, yet hate myself for feeling it,
That this poor world of Custom is my Fate;
That I must be what yet I scorn to be;
That empty as it is, it is my all;
That I should only wreck another soul,
Trying another life;—that I have lost,

With their upbringing, simple womanhood
And patient strength of love? Too late, too late!
That is his step, his ring. I know them well,
As the fond wife her husband's footfall kens,
Home-coming while she watches for his coming.
Ah me! how often I have sat intent
To hear it, while they thought I heeded them
Dully haw-hawing, which he never did;
Stupidly flattering, which he never did;
Or peddling in the Devil's small-ware, gossip
And innuendo, which he never did;
For he is gracious, generous, and true:
And all the time my spirit was not here,
But hovering by the door, and out and in,
And, hungering for him, hated them the more.
And now I shake and shiver like a rush
To hear the step which I shall hear no more.
No more! he will not see me any more!
No more! and I must snap with mine own hand
The gold-thread in my life, and make it all

Leaden and passionless forevermore !
I hate it all ; I 'll do some wicked thing,
I know, ere all is ended. How I dread
The future they have fashioned out for me,
And fierce rebellion of the best in me
Against the duty which were good for me !
Heaven help me to be true at least to him
When falsest to myself ; my way is hard."
Then she sat down, and was composed and calm
To look at, as a marble monument.

Loquitur Rose.

NAY, sit down there, and touch me not :

I am not worthy ; and I feel
In my shamed soul the leprous spot
Burn in thy presence. I would kneel,
Or put my neck beneath thy heel,
If Nature had her way, and youth
Its old simplicity and truth :

But the wolf's gnawing we conceal
'Neath a surface passionless, bland, and smooth.

No more ashamed of doing wrong,
We are ashamed of feeling right,
Ashamed of any feeling strong,
And of all shame ashamed quite :

And I am like the rest ; the light
Laughter of fools arrests my shame
And self-contempt and bitter blame :

So we must meet as if the might
Of passion and pain were an empty name.

Ah me ! 't is hard for me to speak,

And will be hard for you to hear ;
Yet do not comfort me, nor seek

To soothe one pang or stay one tear.

No fear of that, alas ! no fear ;
More like to scorn me for the lot
Which I have chosen ; yet scorn me not ;

I 've been so happy, being so dear ;
Yet I 'd rather be hated than quite forgot.

I 've been so happy, and can be

No more as I have been again ;
And my most cherished memory

Henceforth shall be my keenest pain.

I have been loved ; that will remain
The treasured thought of all my prime,
The treasured grief of all my time ;

And I have loved, and not in vain,
Though my Love, in Love's vision, was almost crime.

I loved above myself, — above
Mine own capacity of soul,
As one that with an earthly love
Seeks Heaven, yet spurns its high control.

I did aspire unto the rôle
Of a great blessedness, unmeet
For such as me. 'T was very sweet,
While the dream lasted round and whole,
But the sorrow of waking is more complete.

Yet do not let me wholly pass
Out of your mind, though I must be
Apart from your true life, alas!
And from a meaner level see,

As one looks where the stars go free,
Its struggle brave and triumph great,
For you will strive and conquer Fate :
And think not bitterly of me
When you take to your bosom a worthier mate.

But let me speak all I must say,
For I must say it, though my heart
Protests with an indignant nay!
And loathes to play the ignoble part.
Ignoble it is : I have no art
To picture wrong as it were right ;
But if I sin I sin outright,
And know it sin, and know the smart
Will follow as surely as day and night.

I hate a sham ; let bad be bad,
And good be good forevermore :
Who doeth right, let him be glad,
Knowing the good he liveth for ;

Who doeth wrong, let him, too, pour
Unshrinking light upon his ill,
And do it with determined will:—

Our Devil clings to his rôle of yore,
And is fain to play the good angel still.

I had a schoolmate once,—a girl
Much like myself, not very good,
Nor very bad; no precious pearl,
Or perfect flower of womanhood;
But one that graced and understood
Our pleasant, artificial life,
And would have made a charming wife,
Had she been only gayly wooed
By a fine redcoat and a drum and fife.

But there came one across her way,—

A Priest: a grave, high-thoughted man,
Who did not lag behind his day,
But bravely dared to lead the van

Of Progress : with a lofty plan,
Not counting for himself the price,
Up the great stair of Sacrifice,
Trode by the meek and lowly One,
He would lead our gay world into Paradise.

He came across her path, and she
Caught up his dream, and dreamt awhile ;
She came across his path, and he
Found dreams angelic in her smile ;
He had no knowledge, she no guile :—
Leave that to satire-novels ; both
But dreamt a happy dream, not loath ;
There was no woman's art or wile
When she gave to him freely her plighted troth.

And for a while she strove to live
His life, and meekly played her part ;
And for a while she tried to give
Not service only, but her heart

To sacred work and thought and art ;
To help the poor, the sick to cheer,
And breathe sweet love instead of fear
 Into our worship, and impart
To all men the feeling that God was near.

Why do I dwell on this? Because
 'T was not herself, but he that spoke
In her. And soon there came a pause
 In her hot zeal. The spell was broke,
And once more, her old self awoke
With yearning for the former days,
The laughter crisp, the empty praise,
 The dressing, dancing, and the flock
Of butterflies sunning them in her rays.

Then by and by, in her old place
 We met her ; first, a matron meek,
Come to diffuse a light of grace ;
 But for this task she was too weak,

When guardsmen gathered round to seek
The old smiles, and the banter light,
And midnight chatter sparkling bright
With airy bubbles; while a bleak
Loneliness reigned in her home all night.

What would you? There was nothing wrong
In our sense, only flirting gay.
Meanwhile the grave priest went along,
With heavy heart, his weary way,
Heavier hearted every day,
Till, as a shield for her good name,
Weary and dreary he, too, came
To ball and rout and drum and play;
And she squandered his life in her reckless game.

His vow to cherish her he deemed
First of all duties binding; so
The glorious dream which he had dreamed
Of a great battle with sin and woe,

And dealing them a deadly blow,
With a brave woman by his side,
Became a mournful strife to hide

A broken heart, nor let her know
How the hope and the light of his soul had died.

Now, hear me : I too had my dream,
The which I fondled day and night,
It shed upon my life the gleam

Of a new world of truth and right ;
Nor all in vain, for in its light

I see as I had never seen

Before ; I see that life is mean

Without the purpose and the might
Of a noble Faith, and a Hope serene.

And yet 't is but a dream with me,

Vague, feeble, and unsolid : I
Am of the world, worldly ; I can see,
Admiring still, the vision high,

And feel the sentiment and sigh
Of truer nature in my breast,
Our artificial world confessed

A proven vanity and lie, —

But the owl sees the sunshine and winks in its nest.

I am not fit to live your life,

I am not meet to share your thought,

I am not able for the strife

Of any high and glorious lot,

I am not worthy to be brought

Into companionship of those

Who heed not custom as it goes,

Who heed not what opinions float,

Who heed but the light that high Reason throws.

I will not be to you a care,

A burden only changed for death ;

I will not be to you a snare,

As she was to the Priest of Faith ;

You shall not tremble lest the breath
Of slander dim a wife's pure name,
And feeling shame deny the shame,
And sadly smiling bear the scath
Of a nature too shallow to get much blame.

Nay, think not these are motives good
Framed but to hide the ill I do,
Nor drive me to a bitter mood
When my sore heart would most be true
And faithful and tender unto you.
I have done wrong, and hide it not,
But yet it was not in my thought;
And bitterly your heart would rue
Blending me with your life and lot.

Therefore my dream I must dispel,
Therefore my love I must refuse;
It was a sweet and tender spell
Of soft enchantment I did use :

I was to blame ; I therefore lose
The one great bliss I ever knew,
The false love which yet made me true,
 Bathing me in its cleansing dew, —
But I know it grew irksome already to you.

Nay, don't deny it ; it was right ;
 You could not help it ; I have seen
Often the anxious, doubtful light
 Of those true eyes when I have been
 Showing a nature small and mean ;
I've watched the shadow of regret,
The pleading look when our looks met,
 The pain and fear you fain would screen, —
And I could not be other, and cannot yet.

And then, too, though I am not old,
 I know my years are more than thine ;
And that quaint thing, your sister, told,
 By many an angry look and sign,

That she did more than half divine
That I, in wanton *idlesse*, angled,
And had, with crafty art, entangled
Your love, and strained upon the line,
Nor cared how your heart was torn and mangled.

Little she knew, — but let that pass ;
Perhaps I played at love ; perhaps
The game to earnest grew, alas !
Ere I could mark the gradual lapse.
The unnoticed tide crept up the gaps,
And circled us with foaming sea,
And there was no escape, and we,
Enforcèd, clasped the love that wraps
Forgetfulness in its ecstasy.

Yet mine is not a love like thine,
Which brooks no rival, fears no ill,
Which time would mellow like old wine,
Which hath no separate end or will,

And is content with loving still.
Such life would grow insipid soon
To me, and tiresome as a tune
Ground on a barrel-organ, till
A change were as welcome as flowers in June.

It should not, but I know it would ;
It seems as if some evil spell
Were on me, holding me from good,
And from the peace unspeakable ;
There is that in me like a bell
Cracked in the belfry, where it swings
Shaming its office, for it rings,
For Christmas cheer and passing knell,
The same false note for all truest things.

Women are fickle, — I am more ;
Women are contrary, — I am worse ;
Even ficklest women can adore,
And in adoring gain a force

Which holds them to a steadfast course ;
But I 've no reverence ; mine eyes
Have only learnt to criticise,
To find out flaws, and trace their source,
And to weary of folk that are good and wise.

I love enough to part with pain,
But not enough to wed thee poor ;
I dare not face the way of men
Who nobly labor and endure,
Seeking a great life high and pure.
But I have one true purpose yet ;
I will not lead thee to forget
The splendid hope of glory sure,
Which was all your thought until we two met.

Ah! you will not believe the truth,
Because it shows me poor and mean ;
You 've dreamt that I am all in sooth,
Which I have dreamt I might have been ;

And should, perhaps, if I had seen
In early years the generous life
Of aspiration high, and strife

For truth and love and faith serene,
Which oft you have pictured for you and your wife.

But this it was not mine to see ;

A household ours where Home is not,
We carp and criticise, and we
Never do anything we ought.

Ah! happy was your sister's lot !

My brother idles, trifles, spends,
And here he borrows, there he lends,

And I, like him, have never thought
Of doing a thing that makes or mends.

Yet we must eat and drink and dress,
And drive in carriages, and ride
In Rottenrow, and crush and press,
Bejewelled at St. James's, tied

Fast to the chariot of our pride,
Have spacious rooms, and sumptuous fare,
And waiting-maids and grooms to share
Our vicious idleness, and hide
The dull stupid *ennui* shot with care.

It's all a lie, this life we lead;
And breeds in all of us sloth and sin;
The coachman wigged and tippeted,
The maid who cannot sew nor spin,
The brawny giant that let you in,
Who should have been a grenadier,
They're good for nothing before a year,
Save lazy gossip, tippling gin,
And keeping a taproom, and drawing beer.

How could I hope to escape the taint?

I've not escaped it,— I am just
Like all the rest, on folly bent

Like all the rest, —devoured with rust

Of idleness ; a hollow crust
Of sentiment, and surface wit,
And scraps of knowledge. I am fit
For no brave life of love and trust,
Or a home where the lamp of truth is lit.

You think I draw my portrait ill,
Beclouded by some fitful mood ;
And fancy you could raise me still
Into a nobler world of good.
'T is kindly said ; but as I brood
Over the thought, I seem to see
You failing of your destiny ;
And for myself I never could
Live the life you have painted to me.

I could not bear the poky rooms
Where Bloomsbury students talk and smoke,
I 'd sicken at the steamy fumes,
The maid-of-all-work would evoke ;

I 'd sooner hear a raven croak
Than hearken to the flow of wit,
And watch the gleams of genius flit,
While shabby artist fellows broke
The silence with laughter loud and fit.

'T was nice, of course, to hear from you
About their wild Bohemian ways ;
One likes to know how people do
Who are not in the world. We gaze
Upon their splendid works, and praise
Their genius, and we long to hear
About their naughty vices dear,
So charming in our books and plays,
Like beings quite in another sphere.

You do not like this tone? I know
You hate a false, affected vein ;
What, then, if we were bound to row,
Like galley-slaves, together, twain

Linked each to each by loathsome chain ;
And by that union sundered more,
Until the fretting bondage wore
Your heart, and left an aching pain,
As the only trace of the love you bore?

It may not be, it may not be ;
'T were grievous sin in me to wed
A soul to so great misery,
Binding the living with the dead.
And now this parting word is said,
We, being twain, may still love on,
Who, being one, had turned to stone ;
We loose our vows, but link, instead,
Our hearts more surely to love alone.

A sad love? Yes! I call to mind,
That fisher-woman long ago
Who, in the storm of sleet and wind,
Lost all her sons at one fell blow,—

Three stalwart men. We saw her go,
Don't you remember? with her dead,
Side by side the corpses laid,

Three long black coffins in a row,
On the bench of the boat, head touching head.

Never a word came from her lips ;

She took the helm, and bent the sail,
And silently slid by the ships,

Where strong men sob, and women wail ;
Across the bar she caught the gale,
And sped on o'er the darkening wave
Into black night : she never gave

One sign, but tearless, hard, and pale,
Sailed with her dead to their father's grave.

And now I go like her, with all

My dead hopes lying cold in me ;
The great mist cometh, like a wall
Of darkness, striding o'er the sea ;

And all my dead are orderly
Spread out beside me ; and I know
That they and I together go

Into the black night, leaving thee, —
I and my dead hopes all in a row :

Into the moonless, starless gloom,
Into the gray and trembling cloud,
Night closing o'er me like a tomb,
The wet mist clinging as a shroud,
And the wind wailing dirges loud : —
Men will call it a wedding gay,
And maids will flutter, priests will pray,
And joy-bells gather the village crowd,
To toast the dead on her bridal day.

Or dead or worse ; they drive me mad ;
I wot not what the end may be ;
And there are times I feel so bad,
And in the shadowy future see,

In dark revenge of misery,
A sinful woman scorning shame,
Spurning a hateful home and name.

I've known such, yearning to be free
That they recked not either of guilt or blame.

I wot not what it means ; but now
The stories of your gray North Sea
Keep running in my head, somehow ;
And weird and eerie tales they be.
Was it yourself that told it me ?
Or some one else ? — I do not know —
How 'mong the isles the tide-waves flow,
Like maddened steeds that frantically
Are lashed into fury as on they go ;

And how a fisher-lad was once
Caught in the race, and swept away ;
And how his oars, by evil chance,
Were reft from him ; and how he lay

Helpless among the tossing spray ;
And how he saw the grim crags loom,
And heard the big waves crash and boom,
Through mists that darkened on his way,
Darkened and deepened like walls of his tomb ;

And how his heart in him grew cold,
As still the boat went hurrying on,
Past foaming skerry and headland bold,
Into the darkness all alone ;
And weird, witch forms, with eyes of stone,
Looked on, and mocked with laughter dread,
As hungry waves, like fierce wolves, sped,
And leaped on him ; and hope was none ;
And he fain would pray, but cursed instead :

And how he lifted up his hand
To pray or curse, as it might be,
And in that moment grazed the land,
When something smote his palm, and he

Grasped a strong rope unconsciously,—
A fowler's rope that dangled there,
Down on his darkness and despair,
Barely dipping the swollen sea,—
And the half-uttered curse gasped into a prayer.

Even so am I on fateful tide
Borne on, and by the surges tossed,
And helplessly I rock and ride,
Alone, and in the darkness lost,
Haunted by many a mocking ghost;
No help without, no help within,
Forsaken in my way of sin,
Forsaken by myself the most,
But I reach out in vain through the gloom and the din.

I reach out, but I reach in vain;
No help for me; I touch the shore;
They only push me back again;
The tide sweeps on, the waters roar,

My head is dizzy, my heart is sore ;
I reach out, but no help is near,
A cloud is on my soul, and fear,
And hate and madness evermore
Are hissing their whispers in my ear.

There is no cord of life for me
Amid my darkness and despair ;
Pity me, look not cold on me ;
There's cursing in the heart of prayer,
And cursing in the very air.
Will you not kiss me once? and say
You love me still and ever? Nay?
So be it. Wherefore should I care
To chafe back the life which were better away.

O heart, lie dead, and feel no more ;
So best, if I must still live on :
The desert life that lies before
Were best to have a heart of stone.

Now leave me ; I would be alone.
You will be happy yet, and free,
And I accept my destiny.

We had a dream, and it is gone ;
And I wake, but there's no day breaking for me.

Book Sixth.



Editorial.

Home! in the gray old house beside the brook;
Home! in the dim old room among his books;
Home! with his sister sitting by his side,
And a fond throng of clinging memories
Hovering about him, as the swallows fluttered
Round their old nests, and twittered in the eaves,
White-throated: there he lay in his young manhood,
A fever-flush upon his wasted cheek,
And a fire burning in his large gray eye;
Waiting, he said, for that uncourtly valet
Who doth unclothe us of our fleshly robes,
Preparing us for sleep. I had my fears;
Yet life was strong, only it had no relish,

And hope was broken ; and the springs of life
Being gone, he only longed to see the end
Of its hard jolting. Then the Doctors came,
And tapped, and stethoscoped, and spoke of râles
And lesions and adhesions and deaf parts,
Cells, stitches, mucus, coughs, and blisterings :
And then, with kindly knowing helplessness,
They shook their heads, and went upon their way.

But he, in full persuasion that the end
Had well begun, was tender, cheerful, kind ;
Not bitter with this world, nor troubled greatly
About the other : yea, he had great peace
Thinking of Hester and me, and laying plans
About our wedding, making settlements
Preposterous, and buying heaven knows what
From heaven knows where, but restless till he saw it ;
Still glad to hear no murmur of the streets,
And see no pile of books and sorted task
Urging the o'erwrought brain, and hold no more

The sluggish pen in weary, fevered hand.
Could he but sleep a little! Oft he lay,
Seeing old faces flit by as in dreams,
Hearing old voices talking in the air,
All senses strangely keen, and fancy quick,
Yet, as it were, a passive instrument
Played on by passing sounds and subtle smells
And lights and shadows, and all fleeting things.
At peace he was with God, at peace with man;
Only he had forgotten how to sleep.

I'm not a poet; I have no romance,
But stand by facts, and laws o' the Universe;
Though doubtless rhyme and rhythm and play of
fancy

Are facts too, and have laws like utter prose.
But what I mean is, if a man abuse
Stomach and brain, they will revenge themselves
For sleepless nights, and hastily snatched meals,
And life at fever-heat. You must not think

Of a heart broken, dying in despair
Of unrequited love. He loved, and lost
That sweetest relish of laborious life
Which henceforth was all labor,—that was all.
It did not change his spirit, did not fill
His mouth with the big words of tragedy,
Much pitying himself; it only set him
Doggedly to his task of work, with force
Unbroken, undivided, unrelieved;
And therein he had lived, and therein found
A joy and fulness of life, till something cracked
With the overstrain of so unresting toil.
Moreover, he had planned a scheme so vast
That only a Goethe-Methuselah, with a power
Of vision, and a power of master-work,
Prolonged a thousand years, had seen the end on't.
But now it is not given to any one
To overarch the structure of all knowledge,
And crown it with its dome and golden cross;
Nor is it given to any one to work,

As God does, leisurely, because he draws
Upon the unmeasured ages, wherefore he
Alone may say "'T is finished, and very good."
We only do a part, and partly well
And others come and mend it. Thorold tried
Too much for our brief life, — a cosmic work,
And toiled to do it in his week of days
That had nor fresh-breathed morn nor restful eve
For him. So he broke down, a wreck, at last,
Achieving but a fragment of his thought,
A porch, a pillar, and an outline dim.
Some deemed he was a failure ; others saw
The germ of grand discovery in his thought,
And worked it to their profit. Ah ! well, well :
There are who give us all they have, complete,
Nothing omitted, nothing lying behind,
All formulated, tidy, docketed,
Tied neatly up in ribbons, laid in drawers,
And handy for our use, — an entire soul,
With all its thoughts booked up to the last hour

In double entry: these don't interest me;
I know them, and am done with them; they have
No infinite possibilities, no shadows
Of the great God upon them, and their light
Is but a row of foot-lights and reflectors
Shining upon the stage, and on themselves.
But others, more aspiring than achieving,
Achieve all in suggestion. They lie down
With Nature, as Ruth lay at the feet of Boaz,
Who longed for his upwaking, and yet feared
What the daybreak might bring; so they with dread
And yearning wait, till God shall speak to them
The thing they cannot utter, save in fragments,
In broken strains of angel melody,
Or visions momentary behind the veil;
Yet more suggestive of Divinity,
More helpful by their infinite reaching forth
Than all completed thinking. Thorold thus
Pushed at the gates of God, and through the chink
Caught, wondering, some gleams of inmost Light

Transcendent, and some chords of harmony
Entrancing ; unexpected mysteries
Of unison and beauty, heretofore
Or jarring, or divided, blended now
In reconciling vision of higher truth.

Loquitur Thorold.

THANKS, Hester dear, this little hand
Was always gentle ; none like thee
Can smooth a pillow in all the land,
Or sweeten the sick-room delicately :
A tender, loving hand to me, —
Too good, for I was rough and bold ;
Now let me to the sunshine hold
The dainty fingers up, and see
The red light through, as in days of old.

How sweet the day gleams through the faint
Pink curtains of the dear old room,
Like heaven-sent visions of a saint
Tinged with the nature they illumine !

You've kept all here as fresh as bloom,
Just as it was long years ago ;
I have not felt blanch linen so
Lavender-sweet since fateful doom
Lured me abroad to a world of woe.

The old flowers through the window toss
Wafts of sweet incense ; roses pink
Knock at the pane, cushioned in moss,
And yellow buds, too, smile and blink
Over the sill ; and as I drink
The fragrant breath, an airy jet
From the sweet-pea and mignonette
Falls on the sense, and makes me think
Of the old bright mornings, dewy wet.

Why should, at times, a passing scent,
Just sniffed a moment on the breeze,
Its sensuous power so swiftly spent,
Come laden with more memories

Than the low hum of honey-bees,
Or sound of old familiar strains,
Or rustling of the autumn grains,
Or voices from the whispering trees,
Or the running brooks, or the pattering rains.

The smell of these moss-roses sweet,
More than aught meets the ear or eye,
Speaks of old times, and seems to greet
Me kindly from the days gone by :—
There by the window you and I
Hearken the kirk bell in the air,
I see our mother on the stair,
And white-capped matrons leisurely
Trudging along to the house of prayer.

They are all gone, all sainted now,
All clothed in raiment clean and white ;
With palm-crown on each grave, sad brow
They stand before the Fount of light,

And praise His glory day and night ;
No wrinkles on their face I see,
No toil-rough hand, nor stiffening knee,
Yet clinging to their glory bright
Is the scent of the sweet thyme and rosemary.

How the old books look bright in gold !
You must have dusted them all day
To keep them so from moth and mould.
Those were school prizes near you ; pray
Give me my Homer, that I may
Smell the old Russia smell once more,
And feel the old Greek torrent pour,
Like plashing waves on shingly bay,
As the King mused, wrathful, along the shore.

Have you forgot your Greek, and all
Our quarrel? How you would have sent
Fair Helen from the Trojan wall
Back to the King of men, nor spent

One arrow though the bow were bent,
Nor borne a dint on Hector's shield,
Nor planted banner on the field,
Nor shouted from the battlement,
For a woman whose faithless heart could yield.

You held the men unfit to rule
Who 'd launch their galleys on the deep,
And leave their realms to mickle dule,
And lonely wives to watch and weep,
By sandy shore and rocky steep,
For leman false and lover faint;
Yea, were she pure as purest saint,
Better have died than so to keep
The kings from their high task of government.

What scornful beauty you would show
In scorning beauty and its charms!
How eloquent your words would grow
O'er lordless realms and vague alarms,

And feeble age with rusty arms
Fending the matrons, while the men
Were bleeding on the sand or fen,
Or dreaming of their homes and farms,
Or fattening the lean wolf in his den.

I think you should have been the boy,
You were so politic and wise,
Impatient of an idle toy,
And piercing with those steadfast eyes
The heart of all great enterprise.
While I—ah me! my life is sped,
Already numbered with the dead;
And with the vanities and lies
Clasp it up in its coffin lead.

Yes, yes; I know you 'll say me nay;
You still believe in me, though I
Have lost faith in myself, and pray
For nothing but in peace to die,

And be forgotten by and by.
O sister's faith, so fond and true,
Still hiding failure from our view!
Close-clinging ivy green and high,
'That covers the ruin with glories new!

Dear, there 's a small flower lying in
My Terence, near the fortieth page :
'T was the first honor I did win
In science, and my youthful gauge
Of earnest battle to assuage
The thirst for knowledge. Near a stone
I found it blooming all alone,
Upon an eager pilgrimage :
I was first to discover where it had grown.

'T is almost the sole mark to know
That I have lived ; and I would feel
What then I felt when, bending low,
I saw its delicate petals steal

A coy glance, almost where my heel
Had crushed the treasure ; and I drew
A long breath, trembling ; and I knew
The passion of science, and the zeal
To broaden the realm of the known and true.

I found it : but the shepherd lad
Had found it centuries before,
And made his rustic maiden glad
By gilding with its golden store
Her golden hair, — nor cared for more.
We find we know not what ; we know,
And idle blossoms, as they blow
By mountain burn or cottage door,
Fashion our life into which they grow.

That little flower gave bent to all
The best years I have lived on earth
To any purpose. I recall
Gladly our days of childish mirth,

The blithe home, and the kindly hearth ;
But a rarer light still gilds the hour,
When happening on this tender flower,
I found an impulse that gave birth
From an aimless life to a life of power.

Of power? Ah no! This life hath been
Feeble and fruitless, like the faint
And watery glimmer you have seen
Of broken rainbows, never bent
In glory athwart the firmament,—
A sickly splendor, would-be light,
That had not beauty's awful might:
And now the bootless years are spent,
And the darkness cometh on me like night.

O for more time! a little more!

I am so young ; and I had planned
So many years for gathering lore,
So many for my work in hand,—

My Book which, with a purpose grand,
Our fragmentary truth should knit
In cosmic clearness, wholly lit
And by one sovran doctrine spanned —
And now, alas! it will never be writ.

How strangely Destiny is ruled!
This small pale flower became my lot;
And all my wandering fancies schooled,
And gave my life a fixèd thought,
Which to one centre all things brought;
And henceforth this base earth was all
Instinct with meaning, prodigal
Of riches; yet there cometh not
One full-ripe fruit to my blossomed wall.

So be it; God hath ordered all
The way by which my life was led.
Success it had not, or but small;
Nor care I now for laurelled head,

Or sleeping with the glorious dead.
Slight are the trophies I have won,
Meagre is all the work I've done ;
But I have lived, at least, and fed
On that which the noblest live upon.

And now that we are here alone,
Sweet sister, let me tell you all ;
I could not speak to any one
As unto you. Can you recall
A lovely girl, stately and tall,
A maiden with a queenly look,
And how she praised my little book,
And spake of Fame that should befall
The gray old house by the brattling brook?

You did not like her much, I know.

But there was never maiden fair
Seemed worthy, as queen flower, to grow
Well gardened in my heart with care,

The chiefest treasure and glory there.
Fond, foolish Hester! you could see
No Eve my helpmate fit to be

Of all that breathed the common air,
Unless God should fashion her purposely.

And I deceived you, Hester dear,
And spake of loving none like you,
And talked of seeking a career
Of ardent toil and science true,
When all the while I had in view
Her stately form, her glorious eye,
Her high imperial majesty
Of sovran beauty; for I knew
She was my Fate, to live or to die.

And so I left the dear old home,
And so I left you, sister dear,
And precious scroll, and cherished tome,
The gathered wealth of many a year;

And listed no more to appear
With hammer deftly bringing forth
The buried records of the earth,
Or to enhance their facts with clear
Thought, which gives to them all their worth.

And I went forth from thee and them
To the great world of London, where
Men crowd, they say, to touch the hem
Of Wisdom's robes, and breathe the air
Of serene Science; and the care
Of a wise State has garnered all
Fruits of research, since Adam's fall
By wisdom made our wisdom rare,
And man forgot what we now recall.

Heaven help me! I used all the slang
Of penny-a-liner big words then;
guessed 't was cant, and yet I rang
The changes on 't, like other men;

Sweet, you may count that nine in ten
Have naught to say but cant prolific ;
The pious kind is more terrific,
But there's as much in people when
They are literary and scientific.

Abhorred it is of scholar true,
High musing with his books alone ;
Abhorred of accurate science too,
Slow-pondering a leaf or stone ;
But fashion has its torrid zone
Where sages in a week shall grow
Ripe and ready, and seem to know
All that long painful thought hath won
From the heaven above, and the earth below.

I left you then with little truth
In me, — and truth alone is power ;
I left you in your lonely youth
For her ; and found her like a flower

Bee-haunted in the sunny hour,
With a great crowd of wits and beaux,
And varied hum of verse and prose
Encircling her, while she would shower
Several influence as she chose.

And they were mainly fools, — a set
Of parlor-pedants chattering science,
Their thoughts all tangled in a net
Of hard, dry fact; the pygmy giants
Hurled at the gods their proud defiance,
Tracing fit genealogies
Far back among the cocoa-trees,
And fondly hugging brute-alliance
With the monkey tribes and the chimpanzees.

All heresies of art came there,
All heresies of science too,
And theorists were free to air
All social heresies, and new

Commandments that a man should do,
And women who had wrongs and rights,
And patriots from disastrous fights,
And geniuses came there, who grew
Quicker than mushrooms overnights.

A Babel of confusèd tongues!
A Limbo of the inchoate!
A gasping of distempered lungs
That blamed the air, and not their state!
All fain to mend the world and fate,
All hating labor, and the slow
Results that from its patience grow;
And O the froth was very great
As they swirled and eddied to and fro.

Yet wherefore should I speak in scorn?

God made them in their kind, and he
Had use for them, at least had borne
With their most flippant vanity:

As in his Universe we see
A province for all meanest things ;
Even for the earthworm's twisted rings
A service and a ministry,
To silence our hasty cavillings.

And London is not One. It is
A group of villages, a lot
Of cliques and clubs and coteries ;
Where the fresh fact or novel thought,
Filtered from stage to stage, may not
Long time the simple fact remain,
Or thought as sent from the thinker's brain ;
Rogues sweat their sovereigns ; fools, I wot,
Clip smaller the thoughts of their wisest men.

But she? Well, she was like a spring
Of purest water, cold and clear,
Where bright birds come to preen their wing,
And owls and ravens too appear :

She mirrored all as they drew near,
And they all drank, and left no trace ;
But each man deemed he saw his face
Deep in her heart, and had no fear
That the shadow changed when he changed his place.

Me for a while she honored with
Selectest intercourse of few,
Rehearsing every night a myth
Of what I was, and how I grew
In a lone country-house, and knew
Science like Pascal, with no aid,
Except the quaintest little maid
Who was a delicate genius too,
And how she had drawn me out of the shade.

I tired of this ; 't was weary all,
And all unlike the glorious dream,
Which now with smiles I can recall,
Of a fair woman who did seem

Down on my lower world to gleam,
Like something from the heavens untainted,
And for whose love my spirit fainted,
And would all lowliest worship deem
Too poor for her I had shrined and sainted

Perhaps I judged her wrong ; her way
Was harder than at first I knew ;
Her young life panted to be gay,
Her young heart panted to be true,
Her home was all divided too,
False science false religion met,
And lavish waste with scrimping debt ;
Poor heart ! the wonder is she grew
Half so noble as she was yet.

You did not know, — you could not guess ;
But we had plighted love before ;
We pledged it in a long caress
One evening on the gray sea-shore,

As thought came surging like the hoar,
Wild, bursting waves upon the beach ;
It was a passion beyond speech,
Ne'er quite articulate, and the more
Dumb that its hope seemed so far out of reach.

And I do think she loved as well

As she could love ; at any rate
I will not judge her, but will tell
The sorry issue of my fate.

I spake : she said she might not wait
For the slow ripening of my fame,
And the high honors that my name
Would win for some more worthy mate,
But she would cherish it all the same.

Enough ! why dwell on it ? She chose,
After her kind, one of the set ;
A man of blue-books, cold and close,
A scientific baronet,

A creature who would vex and fret
Her soul with circumstantial,
And pottering among chemicals,
And prosing about funded debt,
And his articles in the serials.

So all was over. I had striven
'Gainst clearest proofs, to prove them wrong,
Had fought with doubts, as if for Heaven.
To cherish a delusion strong:
And O the cruel, bitter throng
Of haunting memories that came,
Still summoned by her cherished name,
Sweeping like mocking ghosts along,
As the dreary night-wind shook the window-frame!

Seemed now the world a weary waste,
A heartless world, a thing to scorn;
'T was only coldness made the chaste,
And Cupid was of Plutus born;

And evermore my soul was torn
With jealous rage to think of him,
The dainty prig, so spruce and trim,
Whose acres made my heart forlorn,
Whose love was naught but a summer whim.

Then turned I to my work. Not mine,
I said, to pule for woman's love ;
With searching thoughts will I entwine
Round Nature's porches ; I 'm above
Being a slight girl's silken glove
Shaped to her hand, and laid away,
Or taken up, as fancy may :
I have a problem high to prove,
And the facts to gather, and set in array.

Alone, through many a weary day,
Alone through many a silent night,
I wended on my patient way,
Groping through darkness into light,

Now sore perplexed, now staggered quite,
Yet slowly working out a thought
That all to clearest order brought :
It held me with a spell of might,
And my days were happy, for I forgot.

Happy, for I forgot ! Ah me !
I met her one day in the street,
Looking so sorrow-stricken ! he
Was glancing at his dainty feet,
And with his ready smirk would greet
Me heavy-laden : but I hid
My sorrow as a thing forbid,
And while my pained heart madly beat,
Silently into the throng I slid.

Again I met her in the Park ;
I was then thin and worn and faint ;
It was about the gathering dark,
And scarcely did she know me bent

With toiling day and night. I went
Close to her carriage, and she said,
“Cruel! I hoped to crown your head
With laurel; must my care be spent
On pallid flowers for a grave, instead?”

A weary look was in her eye,
A wasting grief on her cheek so pale;
And in my heart then muttered I,
“So, the stony heart has an unheard wail
Low moaning on the midnight gale,
And sighing now for love like mine,
When love alone is felt divine,
And life is flat, and riches stale,
And the soul awakens to long and pine.”

An evil thought! God pardon me;
The fevered joy of passion fell,
A lurid light, could only be
Glared upward from the depths of hell!

Nay, be not wroth : I loved her well,
Loved her, and love is ne'er in vain,
Loved her, and found in all its pain
A dew and blessing, and the swell
Of a life that joyed like the bounding main.

And I had died in early youth
At any rate. O, blame her not ;
She did but make my path more smooth,
And shed some sunlight on my lot.
I had of old this hectic spot, —
Our mother's gift of delicate bloom :
And it is well she 'scaped the doom
Of early widowhood. I sought
To wed her young life to a fated tomb.

And as I loved her, you will love,
And gently scan her, hap what may ;
Sweet, as we hope to meet above,
You promise, ere I go away.

There, kiss me in pledge of it. I lay
A wager that 's your Hermann strong,
His deep bass booming a Luther-song

Out of a heart as big as gay :

What a great life is that coming tramping along !

Would I be like him? Nay, not now ;

Best as it is, dear : all is best.

I 've lived my life ; and gladly bow

Unto the high, supreme Behest,

As I draw near the hour of rest,

Leaving no care behind me here :

Soon all the mystery shall be clear,

Or in high fellowship of the Best

Little we 'll heed, with the great God near.

My sun sinks without clouds or fears ;

No spectral shadows gather round

The gateway of the endless years,

Where we, long blindfold, are unbound,

And lay our swathings on the ground,
To face the Eternal. So I rest
Peacefully on the Strong One's breast,
Even though the mystery profound
Ever a mystery be confessed.

My old doubts?—Well, they no more fret,
Nor chafe and foam o'er sunken rocks.
I don't know that my Faith is yet
Quite regular and orthodox;
I have not keys for all the locks,
And may not pick them. Truth will bear
Neither rude handling, nor unfair
Evasion of its wards, and mocks
Whoever would falsely enter there.

But all through life I see a Cross,
Where sons of God yield up their breath:
There is no gain except by loss,
There is no life except by death,

There is no vision but by Faith,
Nor glory but by bearing shame,
Nor justice but by taking blame ;
And that Eternal Passion saith,
“Be emptied of glory and right and name.”

Anselm and Luther, Tauler, Groot,
With reverent search and solemn awe,
Saw each some angle of God's great thought,
Saw none of them the perfect Law,
And, in defining much, some flaw
Marred all their reasoning ; nor may
I fashion forth the truth which they
Only in broken fragments saw ;
But the way of the just is to trust, and pray.

I wonder how the twilight shines
On the tinkling brook that cleaves the hill,
And how it rays with great broad lines
Through rifted clouds that slumber still,

And how the fall that turned our mill
Glistens, and how the shadows fold
Around the dew as night grows cold,
And how the lark with tuneful bill
Sings o'er the meadows we loved of old.

I ever loved our earth, and still
I love its scaurs and brooks and braes,
The long bleak moor, the misty hill,
And all their creatures, and their ways,
And many waters sounding praise;
It seems as if my lingering feet
Clung to its moss and grasses sweet,
And ferny glades, and golden days
When cowslips and ladybirds made our hearts beat.

Throw up the window; let me hear
The mellow ouzel once more sing,
The carol of the skylark clear,
The hum of insects on the wing,

The lowing of the kine to bring
The milkmaid singing with her pail,
The tricksy lapwing's far-off wail,
The woodland cushat's murmuring,
And the *whish* of the pines in the evening gale.

Fain would I carry with me all
Blithe Nature's blended harmony;
The half-notes and the tremulous fall
Of her young voices, and the free
Gush of full-throated melody;
And like a child, I'm loath to go,
And leave the elders to the flow
Of speech and song and memory,
And take me to sleep in the room below.

But I can yet take up the prayer
Of childhood at the mother's knee,
And breathe it as the natural air
Of truest Faith and Piety,

Its meanings deepening as I see
My deeper needs, his deeper light ;
For wonder grown to wisdom might
Find there fit utterance and a key
To the thoughts that reach to the Infinite.

My Father, lo ! the end draws near,
And in thy presence I am dumb ;
Have mercy on my lowly fear,
And, Father, let thy kingdom come :
I thank thee for my daily crumb ;
Forgive me, as I do forgive ;
And in my dying may I live ;
And when the hours of trial come,
Help and deliverance do thou give.

The End.

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